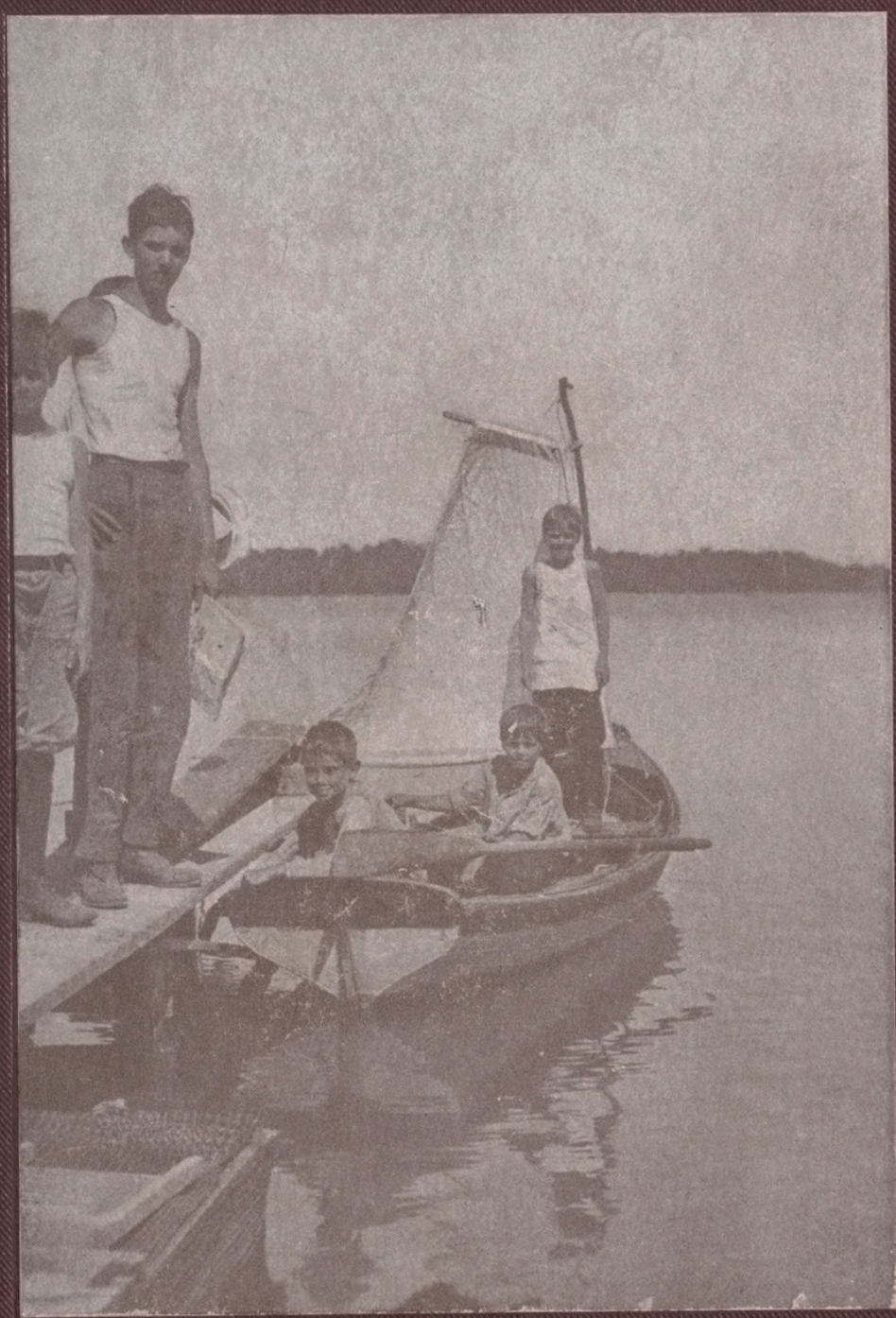
THE THREE RIVERS KIDS



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The Three Rivers Twins.

The Three Rivers Kids

By

F. H. CHELEY,

Author of "Buffalo Roost."

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

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TO

Harris Hurlburt Eberhart

WHO WAS A BOY AMONG BOYS

AND

WHOSE IDEALS ARE THE LIVING SPIRIT

OF

Camp Eberhart

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THE THREE RIVERS KIDS

CHAPTER I

THE TWINS ARRIVE AT CAMP

"SEE the big flag over yonder, just above the trees?" asked Mr. George as he pointed his finger in the direction of the camp. "She lies right there on the north side of the lake."

The three boys, who were the only other occupants of the heavy farm wagon, peered searchingly in the indicated direction, but to no avail.

"You 're stuffing us," said Leonard, the oldest boy, "for I do n't see any flag."

Just then the wind caught the limp banner and spread it to the breeze. Vincent and Harold caught sight of it at the same instant, and a wild shout went up, much to the delight of Mr. George. Then the two younger boys, who were twins, hugged each other in feverish excitement.

" 'Bout ten miles yet, I suppose?" grumbled Leonard.

"Aw, it is n't more than eight," quickly replied Vincent. Then turning, he put the question direct to the driver:

"It is n't, is it, Mr. George?"

The wagon rattled slowly down a long, rough hill, and the flag was lost in the tree-tops for the time being. The horses, a magnificent pair of dark bays, were pulling hard on the lines, and the driver was for the instant busy, but when they began to climb the next long rolling incline he made answer.

"O, it 's just about two miles," then laughed. The boys had already learned in their half hour's journey from Corey Station that Mr. George could not be hurried in his statements. However, they noticed the merry twinkle in his gray eyes, heard his friendly chuckle, and waited patiently.

"It 's easy enough to see that you boys are from the city," he laughed. "You do n't know a mile from a rod, do you? Where do you fellows come from, anyway? Chicago, I suppose."

"Not on your life," cried Harold, with some feeling. "We 're from Three Rivers,

and we're the Botting boys. Haven't you ever heard of us? Me an' Vincent's twins, and Leonard's one year older, but either of us can lick him."

"Thunderation!" snorted Leonard. "Now you fellows begin to blow. You'd think, to hear you talk, that you were famous already in these parts."

Mr. George laughed, and urged on the horses. "Well, I'll bet everybody for a mile around here will know you before you've been here a week, anyway."

There was a low, swampy place just to the right of the road, and as the wagon drew near it Vincent suddenly jumped out and dived into the long swamp grass.

"What's he after now?" asked Mr. George, as he pulled in the horses. But by that time Vincent had reappeared, mud from head to foot, his face beaming. He held his prize proudly up for inspection.

"First camel-back I've seen this summer," he cried as he held up the struggling turtle. "I'll make a belt-buckle out of him." He climbed back into the wagon, extracted a piece of twine from his pocket,

and tied the turtle fast by the hind leg in less than a jiffy. The loose end of the string he fastened to a button on his coat, and slid the turtle into his pocket.

Suddenly Mr. George felt a sharp slap on his shoulder, followed by another, and then another. He turned quickly, and a scowl clouded his kindly face. Vincent noticed it and became intensely embarrassed.

"Excuse me, Mr. George," he said. "I did n't mean to be fresh, but I wanted to kill that big horsefly for my turtle." Then the smile came back again. "Gee, I 'd hate to be shut up in a dark hole like that without anything to eat, would n't you?" and he patted the pocket of his coat. Mr. George only smiled as he gave the horses a little tap with the lines.

Harold had taken a great liking to the old gentleman, and to show it he climbed down from the trunk upon which he was sitting and into the seat beside Mr. George. Vincent held the same ideas, and in a second followed his brother. Here they sat for the remainder of their short ride, listening

with breathless interest to Mr. George's descriptions of how the country had looked when he came into it as a boy. He told them of how the original room of his farmhouse had been built years before he came there, by an old Indian trader who had gone crazy in his old age, and how the orchard back of his house was more than seventy-five years old and was still yielding. He told them story after story, as he had heard them, of the Black Hawk War, and of the purchase by the Government of the Indian lands, until they were really sorry when the road turned sharply and they passed through an iron gate and on to the lake road, which was a shady path along the north side of Little Corey. As they passed, the red-winged blackbirds scolded from the trees, while their slate-colored mates bobbed restlessly up and down on the slender cat-tail stalks along the water's edge.

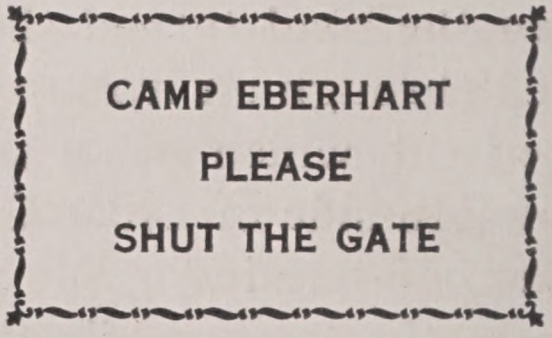
"Believe me," whispered Harold, "I 'll bet there are a thousand young blackbirds in that cat-tail swamp. I 'm coming to see early in the morning. Will you come, too, Vincent?"

"Not on your life. I 'm going to fish. I got to have a fish right away. Why, it seems like nearly a hundred years since I 've been fishing," replied his brother.

"O, shucks!" said Leonard, in a scornful tone. "You could n't even get a good-sized mosquito bite in this pond."

"Is that so?" retorted Vincent. "I 'll bet I can catch a dozen yellow-bellies before you can. Will you bet?"

Just then they came to a second large gate, and on it was nailed a sign which read:



In a second both boys were off the seat and swinging open the gate. They did not climb on the wagon again, but set off posthaste for camp, the first glimpse of which could just be seen at the end of the road. Soon they stopped, and stood irresolute. There was the camp spread

out before them, the long street of khaki tents, the bath-house, the pier, the long line of trim steel row-boats, pulled well upon the white sand beach, and boys coming and going in every direction. The Twins had felt perfectly at home on the wagon, but now they were abashed. It was all so new, and besides every human form was a strange one to them. As if by common consent they retreated to the approaching wagon and, without a word, climbed on. Their eyes were very large and shining, but their voices had departed.

The wagon rattled over the coarse gravel of the beach, then turned directly in front of the long row of tents. The heavy rumble of the wagon and Mr. George's good-natured "Whoa-a!" had already come to be a signal to the campers that there were more new arrivals. Accordingly the boys began to gather from all sides to "size up the greenies," as they said.

It seemed like an enormous crowd to the Bottings, and they hesitated about getting out of the wagon. Meanwhile

their trunk and other baggage was being set on the ground. Mr. George handed a packet of letters to one of the older boys, who immediately began calling off the addresses to the group about him.

"Here, you 'Shrimp!' Here's a letter from your dad;" and, "Collins, that's for you;" and, "Bill Ruthford, there is your frog lamp, I'll bet a dollar. Longley!—My, O, my! Smell the perfume on that one. Johnnie, here's your book from mamma." And so on through the list. Each boy fortunate enough to receive a letter slipped off to some secluded spot where he could read it and re-read it without being too closely watched.

As the letters were being given out a large, muscular man pushed his way through the crowd to the boys in the wagon. He was clad in khaki trousers and sleeveless jersey; his arms were burned to a beautiful brown, and his muscles—the new arrivals stared in wide-eyed wonderment. They had never seen such a powerful man before, and as they stood looking at him they were just barely con-

scious that he was speaking to them. Then he laughed—a clear, happy, good-natured laugh—and they came back to earth. He was asking them about their baggage. Then his eye caught sight of the trunk and valises on the ground.

"My name is Cooper," he was saying, "and you fellows must be the Botting boys." They nodded.

"Well, we 're glad you 're here, fellows. Hope you enjoyed your ride. We have heard a lot about you, and have been wondering all day just what you 'd look like." Then he laughed again. Vincent looked at him with admiration in his eyes.

"Guess you think we 're kind of small, do n't you?" he asked, in a queer little voice.

"O, do n't mind that," replied Cooper, in a friendly tone. "The best things always come in small packages; at least I 'm sure that 's the case this time. Now, let 's see. O, Mr. Verne!" He turned and shouted to a tall, red-haired man who was standing at the wash bench, removing his whiskers with a wicked-looking razor.

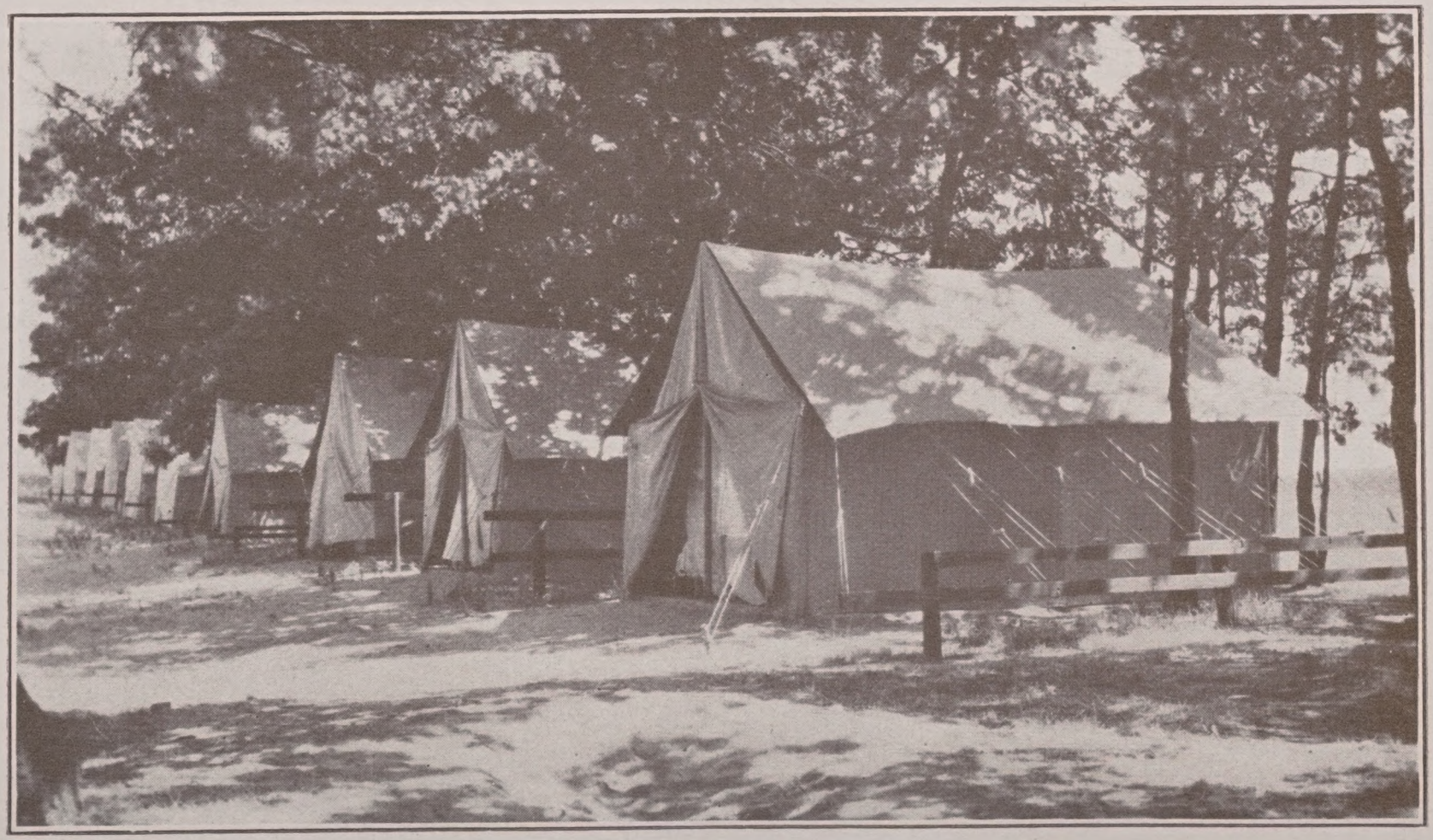
"O, Mr. Verne! Come here just a second. These are the Botting boys. We are going to give you the Twins for Tent One, and we 'll assign Leonard to Four."

Harold stepped over as close to Cooper as he could, and in a loud whisper asked, "Can't we be in your tent, Mr. Cooper? I 'd like to have a bunk right next to yours."

"Sorry, boys, but my tent is all full. Mr. Verne will fill the bill just as well. He will assign you bunks and put you next to things now, and I will look after Leonard."

Cooper and Leonard started away, and the Twins were compelled to wait for the whiskers operation to be completed. Now and then Mr. Verne would direct a word or two at them through the lather, but for the most part these were lost on the Twins, for they were far too busy seeing things just then, to listen to commonplace remarks.

"I do n't like that duck," whispered Vincent, pointing to a tall, gauche boy who was telling a group of smaller fellows in



The tents were pitched in a beautiful grove not far back from the water's edge.

a very bossy voice just how the camp ought to be run.

"Why do n't you like him?" questioned Harold, who loved an argument.

" 'Cause I heard him call us 'little runts' and say something about the 'day nursery' to that other kid."

"O, fiddle," replied Harold, "we 'll take a poke at him if he gets smart. I 'll bet he 's a poor sport all over. We 'll keep our eye on him anyway."

The tents were pitched in a beautiful grove not far back from the water's edge. Each tent in the long row gave shelter to seven boys and a leader. The canvas, double-decked bunks were grouped in the middle of the tent and were all screened in with white cheese-cloth. Directly in front of each bunk on the cement floor was room for a trunk, camp box, or other baggage. Along both sides of the tent, parallel with the bunks, was a row of hooks, and on these were hung all sorts and descriptions of clothing. Each boy took care of his own bed, keeping it clean and in order, besides being directly responsible for the

condition and general tidiness of his share of the tent.

Both boys were assigned lower bunks, and the unpacking was at once begun. The city clothes were quickly changed for the camp costume of khaki and outing shoes. Beds were made, cheese-cloth tacked up, fishing tackle put in a convenient place, and everything was placed in readiness to begin the real days of camping.

"I 'm hungrier than a hay-baler," confided Vincent. "I wonder when they eat."

"I do n't know," came the answer, "and I suppose we can't eat much, or they will think we are pigs. These new camp duds have the tiniest, dinky pockets in them. They 're no good at all. Gee, I do n't believe you could even get three apples in them. Say, Vincent, I got an idea," confided Harold. "I 'm going to cut the bottom of my side pockets off and sew a stocking on to each one. It won't show, and—thunderation, boy!—I got to carry a knife, a bobber, some sinkers, and—and a whole lot of paraphernalia in them."

"What 's 'paraphernalia,' you rube? Who taught you that?" questioned Vincent, suspiciously.

"Well, it 's everything a fellow has to have to go camping. I read it in a book. I want a piece of rope to learn my knots on, and a pocket-ax, and a whetstone, and a scout book, and a roll of film, besides—"

"Well, fellows, how are they treating you? Got those beds made and your duds changed?" The flaps lifted, and in came Cooper. "I thought perhaps you were a little bashful, and I had better come and show you around a bit before supper. You see it 's like this,—I 'm out here for my health—" and he laughed good-naturedly as he doubled up his great brawny arms. "I was going to have a little row before supper, just as an appetizer, you know, and I thought you boys might like to go along. How about it?"

In another moment they were all seated in one of the trim little steel boats and were pulling away from shore. The Twins sat side by side in the stern seat, and Cooper pulled. My! they never knew a

row-boat could go so fast or so easily before.

The lake was placid. Not even a ripple stirred it as far out as the island. The sun was fast setting behind Mr. George's windmill, and the first evening breezes were just beginning to chase the little waves through the channel where Little Corey runs into the big lake.

After they had paddled around the island, up past Bass Point and back, they landed just as assembly was sounded from the hill. The boys knew without being told that it meant supper, although they had not yet learned the bugle-calls.

"My stomach feels like the Gulf of Mexico," confided Vincent, as they stepped on to the pier.

"I have n't been so hungry since dinner time," chimed in Harold, and the three of them set off for the lodge at a good pace.

CHAPTER II

THE THREE RIVERS KIDS MAKE FRIENDS

AS they climbed the hill together, Cooper between the Twins, it made a ludicrous picture, which caused no end of merriment among the fellows. A giant and two pigmies!

"We have enough little shrimps here now," grumbled Dale Worth to the others, "without adding those two more. First thing you know we 'll be playing 'Drop the handkerchief' after supper instead of baseball."

"And-a then we 'll be having lessons in wading instead of swimming," added Bill Rutherford.

"Do n't you worry," suggested "Love" Collins, who was himself a mere pigmy. "Those kids are swell. They know how to mind their own affairs, and that 's more than some fellows I know can do." Then

he giggled and ducked out of the way, for Collins rarely makes such an extended speech as that, and he was surprised at himself.

Gathered about the flag-pole, just in front of the lodge, loitered a group of the leaders chatting together. There were Mr. Verne, the dean of the Camp University; Mr. Blaine, the physical director, and Jimmie Vanden, who looked after Tent Two. Then there was "Deak"—just plain "Deak"—for he had no other name, so far as the campers were concerned. He was right-hand man to the "chief" and helped to care for the office.

Mr. Cooper introduced the Twins and went with them to have their dishes assigned. The line of hungry young savages was forming for the evening meal, and already the great airy dining-room was filled with fragrant odors.

Each boy had a hook on the wall, and here hung his bag of dishes. On the end of the long table was a pile of metal trays, and Vincent noticed that as a fellow got his dishes out he passed the table, took

a tray, and then stepped into line, at attention. He lingered to wait for Mr. Cooper and was utterly unconscious that he was at that moment the center of attraction. All eyes were fastened on him, and a hundred boys were forming opinions of their own. At last Cooper came, and Harold with him, and they fell into line. The "chief" made several announcements, and Mr. Cooper offered thanks for the day's pleasures, including the evening meal. Then the line passed the counter which connected the dining-room with the kitchen, and each boy was given his supper. He took his tray and chose the seat he wanted at the table.

Some way, Harold did not know just how it happened, but Collins beat him to the seat next to Cooper on one side, and Vincent was already seated at his other side; so he slid in where best he could, and lost no time in beginning to eat.

Vincent was listening to the happy chatter about him and studying the fellows near him. Some he liked, and others he was sure he did not like. Dale Worth kept

looking at him with disdainful eyes, and spent the entire supper hour expressing himself about having "so many young kids around." Some one passed Vincent a note, and as he read it his face colored and his fist clenched. It informed him that he had stolen "Shrimp" Warren's seat by Mr. Cooper, and warned him not to repeat the offense under dire threats. He crumpled the note into a tiny wad and tossed it contemptuously to the floor. Then he turned and asked Mr. Cooper who "Shrimp" Warren was, with the result that "Shrimp" was called over and introduced, much to his own discomfort.

"Sorry I took your seat, 'Shrimp,'" began Vincent. "I 'll change with you." "Shrimp" was ashamed, and declined the offer. He suddenly decided that he liked Vincent, and later in the evening, when Dale suggested that they send Vincent over to Mr. George's for a "milk-pump" to skim the milk, "Shrimp" promptly put his foot down on any such doings, much to the surprise of his companions.

Harold sat by Bill Ruthford, and Bill

kept him busy answering questions. Harold could not determine whether Bill was making a fool of him or not, but was as civil as he could be. Bill was good-natured, and that gave him the benefit of the doubt.

"And-a, say, 'Three Creeks,'" commenced Bill; but he got no further.

"It is n't Three Creeks," corrected Harold.

"And-a, what is it, then?" questioned Bill.

"It 's Three Rivers; named so because three rivers join there—the Portage, the Rocky, and the St. Joe."

"And-a, then, 'Portage,' is it true that you and your brother drowned a mule last summer at Clinger Lake because it would n't drink?"

"Who told you that?" demanded Harold.

"And-a, was it you or your brother 'Rocky' that got caught in the chimney playing Santa Claus, and had to be fished out by a chimney-sweep?"

Harold hardly knew whether to be an-

gry or not. Several fellows had crowded around now to see the fun, but Harold kept his head.

"And-a, say, 'Portage,' was it you that set that barn on fire at Three Rivers last Fourth of July?"

Vincent had finished his supper and joined the crowd, urging Harold to come on and wash his dishes, for it was customary in this camp for every fellow to wash his own dishes; and woe to the boy who did not do it thoroughly! For at the next meal the cook would refuse to feed him.

"Say, kids," said Dale, addressing the group, "what do you say? Do n't the new fellows always wash our dishes the first day, so they can get into practice?" The Twins knew this was a testing time, and they must act discreetly.

"Bet they do," called out Bill.

"Every time," added Porter.

"Slim did mine for a week when he came," softly chuckled Durbin to his nearest neighbor.

"Say, you, Dale!" called Vincent. "I 'll

tell you what I 'll do with you. We 'll toss. Are you game? Heads I win, tails you lose. Come on, are you ready?"

"Be game," shouted the crowd to Dale, glad to see the bully have his bluff called.

The coin was tossed and, much to the delight of the crowd, Dale was elected to do the dishes.

"Say, Worth," laughed Vincent, "you know I was tossing for the Twins," and he handed over both sets of dishes. Dale sulked, and objected "to being anybody's slave," but the crowd insisted in such a loud voice that he started for the dish-bench with all three sets of dishes amid a shower of suggestions on washing dishes for a family.

Dale was angry, and as he worked away his face grew warm and flushed. A little mist passed before his eyes. "Caught by a little kid like that in his first attack." It wounded his vanity sorely. As he finished his job he looked up sheepishly from the tub, and as no one was near, he openly swore vengeance on the Twins.

"Beats the Dutch," he muttered, "how

them little snipes got so popular in a few moments, and I 've been here a week already. I 'll bet I 'll do a stunt or two yet. You watch me." And he laughed to himself.

The fellows were already congregated on the ball diamond, and half a dozen baseballs were flying from player to player in practice. Each camper belonged to a ball team, and every evening after supper a game was played. Each week new teams were chosen, so that every boy—good, bad, and indifferent—had a chance to show just what he could do.

"Deak" was the famous pitcher with the glass arm, and Bill Ruthford was the splendid third-baseman. Mr. Verne, because of his excessive "altitude" and his extreme caution, was the prize man on first. Dale played short, and when he was not playing to the grandstand, could do himself credit. "Shrimp" Warren had already won favors as a catcher, while Durbin, Studley, Longley, Porter, and the rest were pretty much all-round men. Johnnie Johnson was the midget "ump," and, al-

though he sometimes stuttered in his decisions, his wealth of timely wit usually saved him a broken crown. The grand stand, a low hill running along the field, was always crowded with "boosters," "crabbers," and the stolidly indifferent. There were at least a dozen official score keepers, and "subs" without number.

The game began, and gradually improved, till it might have been recognized as a game of the National sport by at least the liberal-minded.

The Twins, although they had had several offers to play, chose to sit in the bleachers and size up the situation. They had both played ball ever since they were big enough to walk, and prided themselves on the fact that they knew a good player when they saw one. They were truly American boys, and therefore knew the batting average, strong and weak points of every American player of any consequence, which information they were not slow to disclose.

"Hey, you, Dale!" shouted Harold, after watching Worth make a dozen errors,

"you need a sheet of fly-paper on your mitt."

"A bushel basket with handles on it," corrected Vincent. Then turning to the fellows, "Let 's build Worth a high board fence and give him a policeman to help him run in some of those balls." Dale grew furious and began hurling back threats, but was finally checked by the "ump," who threatened to "out" him if he did n't keep his "jaw closed."

The Twins had the crowd with them, and they knew it. So the friendly jibes went on, until suddenly Dale jerked off his glove, threw it on the ground, and retorted:

"If either of you little snipes can do better, prove it."

In an instant Vincent called his bluff. Off came cap and sweater, and the game went on. Dale sulkily left the field. Harold coached his brother from the sidelines, and together they played the position as it had not been played since camp opened.

It was the sixth inning, and they never

played but seven. The big red sun had dropped out of sight, and the advance guard of mosquitoes were just beginning to arrive. In another ten minutes it would be dusk. The score was eight to seven, in the Twin's favor, and there were three men on bases, with two outs. Durbin was at bat. He stepped up to the plate, surveyed the field and the surrounding country. He was considered the camp weather prophet.

"What are the signs?" teased "Love" Collins, taking in the situation.

"'Red at night, campers' delight,'" quoted Durbin. "It's a great night for flies." He swung the bat, caught the swift ball on its tip, and sent it straight into the sky.

"Fair ball!" called the "ump." Durbin raced for first at breakneck speed. Studley made a fly for second, and Bill fairly jumped home. The fans in the bleachers rose and shouted all the advice known to the game. Vincent heard nothing, saw nothing but the rapidly falling ball. Could he get under it? Would he muff it if he

did get under it? It seemed to him it took a long time for it to drop, but the next instant it was in his hands. He squeezed it like grim death. Then he heard the wild yelling.

"Three outs!" called Johnnie, and the game was over, for darkness had begun to settle. But the Twins had won their way into the heart of every boy in camp.

"And-a, are you a Phoebe bird, 'Rocky?' " questioned Bill, as they left the field. "I 'm sure you must be some kind of a fly-catcher, anyway." Then turning to the "Dean," he questioned, " 'Dean,' have you seen the new bird? He 's a Three Rivers fly-catcher."

CHAPTER III

THE TWINS PROVE TOO MUCH FOR THE CROWD

THE nightly camp-fire was one of the most attractive events of all the camp-life. There had already developed a great deal of rivalry between the tents, as to which one could build the best fire, until it had become a fine art. One night it would be built in the woods, another night upon the sandy beach, and perhaps the next over by the cat-tail swamp on Little Corey. But wherever it was, it always held its hour of enchantment and good fellowship, for no camper was ever too tired, no matter what the activities of the day, to enter heartily into every yell and song and stunt.

When the fire would roar and crackle, the fellows would dance about it and yell like wild Indians on the war-path, then

add log after log to the blaze until the supply was exhausted. But when the flames had died away, and nothing remained but the brightly glowing embers, with here and there the charred end of a stick that had escaped the flames, then the fellows would crowd together in a closer group, often slipping their arms around one another's shoulders, or lounging back into the laps of their favorites. It was then that a great hush would settle over all. In chariots of light drawn by tiny spark-steeds or in swiftly curling wreaths of smoke their thoughts were carried off into strange riots of fancy. Every burning stump and dying ember became alive with sprightly imps and fairies and goblins.

It was at such times that hearts were warmed with fellowship, and that a real spirit of comradeship was brought out. Was it any wonder that at such times, in such environment, the wee small voice of the Great Creator should be heard by many a boy in a new and fascinating manner?

It was at such times that hearts were warmed with fellowship.

"Gee, is n't that scrumptious?" whispered Vincent as he sidled up to Cooper.

"That 's a bum fire," growled Dale. "It 's nothing but a lot of brush. Wait till we get a crack at it."

"And-a then we 'll show you fellows what a fire is," chimed in Bill, good-naturedly. "That one looks like a box of toothpicks."

The songs had begun, then followed the yells, more songs; then, after half an hour of spontaneous fun, the "chief" raised his hands for quiet. This was the time when all the important announcements were made for the morrow, as well as many suggestions relating to conduct and general camp spirit. The group had just settled into quiet, and the "chief" had begun to speak, when "Love" called out in tones of great excitement:

"O, gee, but that was a big bug! It just crawled up that tree. I bet it was three inches long. Belonged to the order of Lepidropta, too."

"The order of what?" questioned Harold.

"Well, that 's what Mr. Verne taught us in nature study yesterday, anyway, order of Lepidropta."

"No, no," corrected the "dean." "Lepidoptera are butterflies. That was Coleoptera, order of beetles. It must have been one of those long-horned borers. They hatch from these large white grubs you find in rotting stumps."

"There are never any long-horned borers in my grub ever," suggested "Shrimp," as he jerked his arms up to protect himself from the shower of punches and pokes that always followed a poor pun.

Again quiet reigned, and the "chief" began a second time:

"Every man in this crowd wants to be sure to win at least his Brown Rag this year. Every fellow that is going to try say 'Aye.' " There was a deafening yell. "Very well; that 's good. I am glad you have so much enthusiasm about it, too, fellows, for it is just like this,—if we are going to have the privilege of spending a few weeks together out here in this great out-of-doors, let us make it pay us back

something in all-round development. Let us not be satisfied with just having fun and being well fed, but let us grow. Let us develop and round out our lives. Every bit of nature study is worth while. Every bit of athletic activity is an asset if it is used rightly, and it is about the greatest thing in all the world for a fellow to be able to find real fun in just helping the other fellow. It is one of the traditions of this camp, fellows, that every boy while here shall learn something of the joy of unselfish service. Why, just look at those second degree tests. Any live fellow can pass eight of these twelve without so very much effort. Let me read them to you:

To catch a one-pound fish.
To be able to demonstrate simple First-Aid measures prescribed by the Camp Physical Director.
To row a boat (passing the rowing test).
To be able to swim 50 yards.
To be able to walk one mile in 11 minutes.
To be able to run 100 yards in 14 seconds.
To be able to start three consecutive fires with three consecutive matches in the woods, with fuel found in the woods;

one of the fires to be built in a damp place. If one fire fails, the entire test must be repeated.

To identify five different butterflies and tell something interesting about each.

To identify five different moths and tell something interesting about each.

To identify five different insects, not butterflies or moths, and tell something interesting about each.

To collect and press 25 different wild flowers and name them.

To jump 6 feet in standing broad-jump."

"What are the first degree tests?" asked both the Twins in the same breath.

"O, yes," replied the "chief." "I forgot you fellows were new arrivals. You see, it is this way. Just being a member of the camp for one week is the first degree, and carries with it the right to wear the camp emblem. Then these tests I have just read are the requirements for the second degree and form a good foundation for the next degree, which gives you the Brown Rag.

"I confess the third and fourth degrees are a little more strenuous than the sec-

ond, but that is what makes us grow; going after something that is a little harder and just a little bigger than we are. Why, you know the whole joy of fishing is to be always fishing for a fish just a little larger than the largest one we ever caught."

"Read the third and fourth degree tests, too," shouted half a dozen.

"Number one:

To be able to start a fire with a fire-drill, the fuel and material used to be found in the woods."

"I've been in lots of fire-drills at school," suggested the official umpire.

"Duck him!" shouted Durbin.

"Into the drink!" came shouts from every direction, but before they could get to their feet Johnnie had disappeared into the darkness.

The "chief" continued:

"To be able to start a fire with a fire-drill, the fuel and material used to be found in the woods.

To be able to tell the correct time by the sun at least twice a day. Sun-time.
To be able to swim 200 yards.
To be able to row a boat one mile in 11 minutes.
To measure the correct height of a tree without climbing it.
To be able to tie and untie eight different standard knots, and name them.
To catch a two-pound fish.
To be able to know and name fifteen different trees in the woods, and give one distinctive feature of each.
To be able to perform on a stunt-night acceptably to the Rag Societies.
To be able to know and name twenty-five different birds as seen around the camp, and give one distinguishing feature of each.
To lead in the Evening Devotions satisfactorily at least once.
To run 100 yards in thirteen seconds."

"Now for the fourth degree:

"To catch a three-pound fish.
To be able to run 100 yards in eleven seconds.
To conduct in satisfactory manner Morning Bible Study.

To be a camp leader one full week.
To teach one boy how to swim (test, 100 feet).
To influence one boy into the Christian life.
To know and to name 25 different trees as found in the woods, and give a distinguishing characteristic of each.
To be able to make twelve standard knots in a rope, and name them.
To conquer one bad habit at camp."

"Now, fellows, just one more word," said the "chief," patiently. "Mr. Blaine and Mr. Cooper will help any fellow who desires it, with the physical tests. The 'dean' will give you all the help you want in identifying your twenty-five trees or birds or flowers, and I will help anywhere I can. Now let us get busy."

Mr. Cooper jumped to his feet, and the noisy chatter that had begun on all sides as the "chief" finished speaking ceased instantly, for when Mr. Cooper spoke, everybody listened.

"Boys, I 'm going to be the first fellow in this camp to win a Brown Rag for this

season. I am going after it hard for three reasons:

"First, because I believe it is the biggest thing I can do while here; and second, because I am absolutely ignorant about all this great out-of-doors. I want to know every tree and every flower and every bird in sight. I want to know how to build fires and cook in the woods Indian fashion. And I want to be able to do everything well that is worth doing at all out here in this camp. But most of all, I am going after that Rag because I want to help the other fellow, and those tests are going to teach me how."

When he sat down there was a roar of approval, and "Three cheers for Cooper," and "Me, too; me for a Brown Rag." Then, finally, the good old camp-yell, with Durbin leading:

"E B E R H A R T
EBERHART!
EBERHART!
That 's what they all say!
What do they all say?
Eberhart!"

There could be no doubt as to the purpose of the crowd after that, for if Cooper thought it was the thing to do, there would be no further question. They would all try for a Rag.

Mr. Blaine then offered a few suggestions concerning the swimming and athletics, and Mr. Verne briefly outlined the nature study work.

"In the library of the lodge, fellows, we have on the walls a colored plate of every tree, flower, bird, insect, and animal common to this region. Just as fast as the living specimens are actually seen by any one of you, we will mark the colored plate. Keep your eyes and ears open, and do n't forget to report what you see."

"'Dean,' I smell a skunk. Can you count that?" shouted Johnnie.

"I saw the king of the order of beetles, did n't I?" giggled "Love."

"And-a, Mr. Verne," called Bill Ruthford, "are bullfrogs the husbands of cowfrogs? I 've seen them already."

"I should think you 'd call those long,

slender cat-tails polecats, Mr. Verne," shouted "Shrimp."

Vincent and Harold were busy making appointments with Mr. Cooper to run their one-hundred-yard dash and to pass their boat test, for no boy was allowed out in a boat alone who had not passed the rowing test.

"I do n't know a cowslip from a Canada thistle," complained Dale. "How do you expect me to find twenty-five wild flowers? I could n't do it if I had all summer."

"O, fiddle," replied Harold. "I 'll teach you some. I do n't know so very many myself, but I bet I can find twenty-five. Use your head, boy. There are three kinds of clover, three kinds of daisies, two different water-lilies, and lots of others. I 'll show you to-morrow."

"O, that 's too much like work, go chasing around all day for a little bunch of wild flowers," continued Dale. Then a happy thought struck him, and he beckoned Harold to him again and whispered:

"Say, kid, let 's work a stunt. I 'll get what ones I can find around here, and I 'll

give you two cents each for all I need to make up my twenty-five. That will be easy money. I can jump my six feet and start my fires all right, and I can bluff through those First Aid stunts easy enough. What do you say? Will you do it?"

Harold had drawn himself up to his full height, and a scornful look came into his clean-cut, manly face. He made no reply for a few seconds, then: "You go jump in the lake." He fairly hurled the words at Dale. Then he went back to the fire and sat down by "Love" Collins. "Love" was scribbling down the names of the birds he had seen that day. He had thirteen, and together they decided to find the rest on the morrow.

The fire had burned low now, and it was nearly time for taps. Mr. Blaine led the brief Evening Devotion, bringing home a simple, helpful thought; then thanked the Great Father for the happy day with all its experiences; and then off to camp.

As they strolled carelessly down the beach in a dozen little groups toward the

tents, Harold felt some one nudge him in the back, and turning, he saw "Love" and "Shrimp" beckoning him. When they had slipped off in the darkness, "Love" began the conversation in a mysterious whisper:

"You kids want to keep your eye peeled to-night, 'cause Dale is trying to fix up a game on you. You better leave off your pajamas for awhile after you go to bed."

"Duck us? Dale duck us?" cried Harold. He was just about to tell of Dale's suggestion concerning the flowers, but checked himself. What was the use?

"Now, do n't make any fuss about it," cautioned "Shrimp," "'cause everybody likes to help initiate the new fellows. Take your medicine and be game, only pull Dale in with you."

"There 's lots of funny things happens nights," chuckled "Love." "Bill Ruthford would rather see a kid pulled out of bed and ducked in the drink than go to a three-ringed circus any day."

Lanterns were soon lighted, and there

was a general disrobing. Before long every fellow was comfortably stretched out in his roomy bunk, while here and there a leader could be heard giving orders to be quiet while one by one the lights went out. As always happens, each tent possessed at least one humorist, who found it very difficult to sleep as long as a single funny saying remained unsaid. So for the next few moments there was much whispering, with every now and then a suppressed giggle. Mr. Verne, who was night captain of the tent street, came along, lantern in hand, to make his last inspection before retiring.

"Hi, Diogenes! Hunting for an honest man?" came from one tent.

"Gee, take a peep at the size of that firefly," from another.

"Jigger the 'dean,' " came from a third, and so on down the entire street.

At exactly nine o'clock the stillness of the night air and the monotonous buzz of hungry mosquitoes were broken by the clear, round notes of the bugle. The remaining lights were put out, and quiet

reigned, for Taps had been sounded. The days were so full of activity that when night came there was not much difficulty in securing quiet. Of course there were occasions, such as when a friendly skunk came to visit, or when the pigs got out of the farmyard and held a grunting practice down by the locker house, or when "Red" Goodwin told long, incoherent stories in his sleep—when sleep and quiet were temporarily banished.

The Twins, fortunately, had arranged their bunks so that their heads were together. They had laid their plans very carefully, and were sure, in case of trouble, that they would be able to take care of themselves. They lay in their beds, wide awake, suppressing their excitement as best they could, their eyes and ears straining out into the darkness to catch the first glimpse of a ghastly shadow or the first sound of approaching footsteps.

It seemed that they had waited an hour at least, when suddenly there was the faintest whisper just outside the tent. Then there was a suppressed giggle.

They were really coming, then! Vincent could hardly keep quiet.

"And-a I 'll catch 'Portage,' " Bill Ruthford was saying, between chattering teeth.

"You go in at the other end," they heard Dale say to some one who moved between the tents toward the back opening.

"They won't be suspecting," reassured Bill. "There has n't been a soul leave—" The Twins could n't quite catch the rest. They heard Mr. Verne's heavy breathing above them, and Stellner's gentle snore in the other upper.

From somewhere up the tent street there came three quick, short, whistled notes. The Twins knew their time had come. Like a flash they rolled out of bed and under the bunks, Vincent bumping his head an awful crack on one of the bed uprights. When they were safely underneath, Harold reached up and gave Vincent's arm a squeeze that told volumes.

The tent flaps lifted slowly, and in came the gang, as noiselessly as a troup of ghosts. They carefully raised the mos-

quito netting on the Twins' beds. There was a surprised exclamation, "They 're gone!"

"Gone?" questioned the others, in amazement. "Gone where?"

The excited whispers were interrupted by wild shouts of "Help!" from Tent Four. The Twins fairly hugged themselves in their delight. Leonard was on his way to the lake in the hands of a desperate gang of outlaws, and they were safe. There was a splash, an awful yell, and several merry laughs; then pajama forms scurried in every direction, and by the time the "dean" got his lantern lighted, and got to the scene of action, the fun was all over.

The Twins took advantage of his absence and slid back into bed and held a very hurried little council of war before going to sleep. Dale Worth and Bill Ruthford were slated from that time forth for a series of mysterious punishments.

The moon came slowly up out of Kaiser Lake, and the rippling water danced in the moonlight, while Camp Eberhart was lost in a calm, sweet sleep.

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH DALE WORTH MAKES A MISTAKE

THE great yellow moon of the night before had turned ghastly pale, and in its place rose the morning sun. It was a glorious June day, and already several boats had put out from camp to do a little before-breakfast bass-fishing.

Vincent awoke with a start and sat up. He had been dreaming of evading a gang of rowdies, of whom Dale Worth was leader. Surely he had heard Dale's voice outside. He rubbed his eyes and listened.

"Thunderation! Why do they have to lock all the boats at night? Nobody 's going to steal them," complained Dale, as he passed Tent One accompanied by Durbin. They stopped a moment at the pump to drink, then went to the boats.

"You get me a pair of oars," suggested Dale.

"Not on your life, boy. I 'm not your

servant," replied Durbin. "Get your own oars, like all the rest of us do. You 're able-bodied, are n't you?"

Dale placed his rod and bait in a boat and sullenly started back toward the locker house with Durbin. Vincent watched them disappear inside. Like a flash he rolled out of bed and fairly flew to Dale's boat, snatched up the can of worms, and was back again in a second. He was sure they had not seen him.

Meanwhile Bill Ruthford and Studley came down the tent street and joined the others at the locker house.

"What 's the weather signs, Durbin?" asked Studley. Durbin laughed, surveyed the lake and the sky, then replied with a good-natured chuckle:

" 'Love' saw the whole order of beetles last night as we sat by the fire, and the old saying goes:

"' When at night the beetles play,
To-morrow will be a glorious day.' "

They all moved toward the boats, laughing and joking, and in another instant

they were paddling away to the fishing grounds of their choice.

Vincent laughed to himself. "I 'll bet the fish are biting great this morning, too. Hard luck, Dale, old scout. You 'll have to come back without even a nibble." With that he stepped noiselessly out of the rear of the tent and set the can of worms on the steps of the locker-house, then slipped back to bed. Dale was heading straight across the lake, and Vincent knew it would be some time before he discovered that he had no bait.

He had nearly dozed back to sleep again when he heard a boat bump unceremoniously into the pier. He looked out and saw Dale throw his oars disgustedly on to the sand, then climb out of his boat. Vincent lay down again and pretended he was asleep. It was well he did, for Dale came straight to Tent One and cautiously looked around under the bunks. After satisfying himself that the bait was not there, he turned and went to his own tent, and Vincent saw no more of him till breakfast time.

Reveille broke on the morning air, and in a moment the beach was fairly swarming with naked figures of every size and build; some as brown as berries, some all tender with sunburned arms and shoulders, and some still white. When the "All In" signal came there was a joyous shout, a splash, and every figure disappeared in the water, only to appear again sputtering and spitting, with teeth a-chatter. Next came a hasty rub-down; then they dressed. Here and there a lazy fellow peeped out from under his covers and, with yawns and stretches, inquired the time of day.

All of the wash basins near the pump were being pressed into service, while here and there a fellow could be seen peering into a small mirror, fastened up on a tree, and combing a woolly head. The Twins had discarded their shoes and stockings, so were about the first campers to be dressed. They sat down to watch the others make their hasty toilets.

"You kids kind of gave them the slip last night, did n't you?" laughed Studley, to which the Twins just smiled.

"Gee, your brother was scared to death," broke in Jimmie Vanden.

"What was all that rumpus about last night, anyway?" asked the "dean" in mock anger. "You kids would n't let a fellow get a decent sleep on a bet, would you? You better not let the 'chief' catch you at any such tom-foolery, or he 'll have you on the carpet."

Just then "Love" arrived with a gorgeous moth held firmly between his fingers.

"Mr. Verne, what order does this belong to? I 'm so mixed about bugs and things that I 'm out of order myself." Then he giggled and looked around at the crowd. The "dean" was just beginning a very learned and scientific discourse on the subject of moths when the last bell rang and there was a wild scamper up the hill, for if any boy was late in the line-up for colors or late to any meal, he lost his meal, and that was a very serious thing for any live and active boy.

On top of the hill, just in front of the lodge, the line was forming. Porter and

Longley already had the big flag snapped to the halyards, and "Shrimp" Warren, who was the official bugler, was awaiting the flying of the colors before blowing his bugle. Mr. Blaine was officer of the day and gave the commands. The long line straightened, came to attention, then all together gave the salute. In clear, cheery tones it rang out.

"I give my head, my hand, and my heart to my country. One God, one Nation, one Flag." The banner was pulled up the pole and spread itself to the morning breeze.

Breakfast was just like the other camp meals, a joyous time of chatter and fun. The Twins found their popularity growing, much to the disgust of Dale, who took a long time telling Bill what he thought of fellows "that would sneak out of a little midnight joy." Vincent waited for him to say something about the missing bait-can, but of that he said never a word.

The brief morning devotion was held out on the hillside, under the giant oaks, and was the real beginning of activities for the day. Just following it came the period

"I give my head, my hand, and my heart to my country. One God, one Nation, one Flag."

when the camp work was detailed to the different tents to be done. Every camper knew that he would have some simple task to do every day, and was always eager to learn what it was to be. This work, under the direction of the leaders, was pleasant and much enjoyed as a usual thing. Occasionally some boy who happened to be a little out of sorts would slight his duty; then the Camp Council, that powerfully efficient body elected by the campers for the campers, always found the culprit and meted out to him a fair and honest punishment. The government was excellent, for every councilman was liable to the council, and upon more than one occasion the campers' power of recall had saved the day and given entire satisfaction to the majority. The "chief" always assigned the detail of work and added brief comments by way of explanations.

"'Tent One will replenish the supply of fire-wood in the lodge and kitchen. Tent Two will build the evening camp-fire, not too big a one, fellows, but a substantial one. Tent Three will sweep the dining-

room and porch. Tent Four will repair and line the baseball diamond. Tent Five will clean the boats. Tent Six will send one man to each tent to help in their regular detail. The remaining two boys of Tent Six empty the trash cans, and be sure to burn their contents.

"Do n't forget the morning swim at eleven, and you boys that are being tutored, do n't fail to meet Mr. Verne at the university at nine." He pointed his finger down to the white tent pitched back in a quiet, secluded spot on the shore of Little Corey.

The leader in Six detailed his men as ordered, and as luck would have it, Dale was sent to aid Tent One in getting in the wood. Mr. Verne was called to the office for something, and turned his command over to Vincent. Dale promptly refused positively and determinedly to take orders from "such a little snipe." Instead of bringing in the smaller wood for the kitchen, as was necessary, he brought in an armful of great knotty chunks and tossed them carelessly behind the stove.

The cook saw the spirit in which Dale was doing his duty, and, knowing it was contrary to all good camp spirit, he took the matter into his own hands.

"Now you jes look heah, sonnie. Do n't you get too gay, or you an' me 's goin' ter have a jamboree right off quick," he said.

"How many bosses has this gang got, anyway?" hotly replied Dale.

"All it needs to make fresh young 'uns like you act proper," came the prompt reply. There were one, two, three hurried steps, and the next instant a big black hand had Dale by the lobe of the ear and was leading him toward the stove.

"Ise de boss in dis heah kitchen, an' I ain't got no mo' use fo' dem logs you jes' fiahed behin' de stove den you has."

Dale was too astonished to resist. The cook continued: "Now youse gathah up dem logs an' tote 'em out 'n heah; does ye heah me? Den stay out 'n dis yeah kitchen yerself. Ah ain't got no time to be foolin' wid such a spoiled baby."

Dale's face fairly flamed with embar-

rassment. The other boys had heard. He hesitated, then did as he was told. When once he reached the open door he flung down the wood, picked up a shovel, and disappeared over the hill. The Twins without a word of complaint did Dale's share of the work. As they left the kitchen they were talking earnestly together.

"Mind you, do n't say a word about it to Mr. Verne," said Harold. "It won't do any good." The cook heard, and laughed to himself. "Dem kids is something like it," he said. "Regular good sports, both of 'em."

A little later the "chief" came in, and the cook reported the whole incident just as it happened, praising the Twins to the sky for their real camp spirit.

"Yes, they are a couple of the right sort of boys," agreed the "chief." "The difference, you see, is in their bringing up. The Bottings came from a well-regulated home with all its advantages. There being the three of them, too, they have learned among themselves what unselfishness and

loyalty is. But with poor Dale it is different. He is the only boy of a wealthy father, and his mother has been dead since he was a baby. He has always done just as he pleased, and now the unselfish camp spirit of 'Other Fellow First' is hard on him. Sometimes I think he is absolutely hopeless, and at other times I find a good streak in him. There is one thing certain, though, if this camp can't find the good that is in Dale, nothing can; and here is hoping. I hate to be disappointed in a boy."

Dale had gone from his work to dig more bait, and was just returning. As he passed the open door he heard the last sentence of the "chief's" remark, and wondered who he meant. Some way he felt guilty; so, avoiding the "chief," he got into a boat and paddled away alone.

Eleven o'clock found the beach lined with campers in their bathing-suits, awaiting the "all in" signal. The Twins were sitting on the extreme end of the spring-board, dangling their feet in the water. They had not yet learned that it was a

serious offense to sit on the springboard, especially out past the spring. But they were to learn that shortly.

Dale landed, and held up his string of fish. He had had good luck and was in high spirits. As he was placing his fish in a bucket he noticed the Twins on the springboard. He looked around, and seeing some of his friends, he held a whispered conversation with them. They were to make a dash for the pier, grab the Twins, and toss them into the lake for sitting on the springboard—and for cheating them of their fun the night before.

"One, two, three!" called out Dale, as they swooped down on the Twins, who had hardly time to get to their feet before the gang was upon them.

"Into the lake with the little snipes!" shouted Dale. "We'll teach them to sit on the springboard."

The Twins took in the situation at a glance, and stood on guard.

"Tackle low," whispered Harold, as he flung himself at Dale's legs. The attacking party had not expected any opposition.

Before they knew it Dale and Harold were rolling on the pier. Dale was helpless, held by both legs. He struck madly, but Harold was too small and too quick for him. Suddenly Harold released his hold on Dale, and Dale slipped over the edge and into the water. A howl of laughter went up from the gathered crowd. The "All in" signal rang out above the tumult, and in another instant the Twins had dived from sight, coming up some little distance from the crowd.

"That 's one on you, Dale," shouted "Shrimp" from the shore.

"And-a are your clothes wet, Dale?" called Bill, who was just as pleased with the incident as if it had happened in the dead of night and under the most mysterious circumstances.

"And-a Dale is some duck," he chuckled to the fellows. "Just look at his webbed feet."

Dale was seated on the pier, pulling off his water-soaked shoes and stockings.

"Never you mind," he threatened. "I 'm going to clean up on this whole blamed

place one of these days, then skip. You 're a regular bunch of yaps, all of you. You always get a fellow into a mess, then laugh at him. Bill Ruthford, you 're as double-faced as the town clock. I 'll bet it was you that stole my bait this morning. I 'll get you, you see."

The crowd howled with delight. "Hey, you fellows; let up!" called Mr. Cooper from the top of the chute-the-chutes. "Dale, go to your tent and change your wet clothes. What are you doing in the water with them on, anyway?" which was followed by a second spasm of laughter.

That morning the Twins successfully passed the rowing test and swam their two hundred yards, and were happy with the prospect of winning their Brown Rags.

"We 're going off into the woods this afternoon to try lighting our fires," called "Love" just after dinner. "Come on and go along." He began to make signs, first putting his fingers into his mouth, then rubbing his stomach with apparent satisfaction.

"What does he mean?" asked Vincent of Harold.

"O, I know," replied Harold. "He means they are going to find something to eat. Let 's go." So off they trotted to join the crowd.

Some way supper did n't taste as good as usual that evening, at least to the Twins, for they had eaten no less than three pints apiece of big ripe dewberries.

The ball game was slow that evening, for every one was tired. Even the camp-fire held nothing new, except that "Love" captured a rare imperial moth that was flitting about in the firelight and learned its order and scientific name, much to his satisfaction.

The fellows were lined up ready for the evening dip. Mr. Cooper was not on hand, so Jimmie took command and gave the signal. There was the usual splash and shout, then there was a patter of bare feet on the pier. A naked figure struck the end of the long springboard, rose in the air, and was gone. Some one had dived off the springboard into the deep water in the

dark. Jimmie was frightened, and in another second he was at the end of the pier, looking out over the water. He saw nothing. Every swimmer seemed to be inside the rope where he belonged. Never had a day passed but the boys had been warned of the danger of just such a thing, and had been told time and again that the evening dip was a dip only, and not a swim. Jimmie was so frightened that cold shivers ran up and down his naked back. He peered out into the darkness, then called with all his might for Mr. Cooper, who came running from his tent to see what was the matter.

"Some one dived off the springboard into the deep water, and he did n't come up. What shall we do?"

"He must have come up," replied Cooper; but to think was to act with him. He put his hands to his mouth and called, "All out!" in a voice that was instantly obeyed.

"Line up quick!" The boys obeyed like machinery, for they knew promptness was important just then. He hurried down the

line, taking note of every fellow as he passed. He was so accustomed to keeping track of each boy while they were in swimming that he felt sure he would know who was missing. He came to the end. Every boy in camp was there. He was puzzled. Then his clear voice rang out:

"Who dived from that springboard just a moment ago and swam back to the rope under water?" There was no reply.

"Did some one misunderstand me?" He fairly thundered out the words. The excitement of the moment before was expressing itself in his quivering body. "I want to know what boy jumped from the springboard a moment ago?" The boys looked inquiringly at one another. They were unaware that such a thing had happened. A long minute passed, during which the only sound was the chatter of teeth and the quick breathing of the wet boys.

"I want to—" but he got no further. Dale Worth stepped out of line with a sheepish "I did, sir."

"Just as I thought," exclaimed Mr.

Cooper, disgustedly. "Now go to your bunks, all of you." The line broke, and in a second there was a wild chatter of excitement.

One of the fundamental laws of the camp had been broken. What would be the result? There were as many different opinions as there were boys, and much speculating.

Mr. Cooper, the "chief," and Mr. Blaine held a long conference, then the three moved off to Tent One. In earnest tones the "chief" explained the seriousness of the affair.

"We can't have fools in a camp like this," said he, "for we are just as responsible for their safety as for that of you sensible fellows. Suppose that boy had never come up, out there in the dark. Suppose he had cramped. Could any one have heard him in that deafening noise? He would have drowned, that is all. Now, if there is any fellow in this tent who does n't wish to live up to the simple rules we have here, we want him to go home."

So down the tent street they went, giving the same advice to each group. When they reached Tent Six, Dale got angry and aired his sentiments freely.

"Dale, you can live up to our rules or go home," said the "chief." "If you are going to pull off many such stunts we do n't want you here anyway." Dale was sullen and remained silent until the men had passed on to the next tent. Then he expressed his views in flowery language, concerning every one in general and some few men in particular.

It was a long time before quiet was secured that night, and it was a still longer time before at least one boy fell asleep.

"To-morrow I will pack up and go home," he said to himself. "I will not be called down before this bunch for a thing like that. I will show them who is my boss, and when I get home I will knock the camp on every side, for every hour of the day something is wrong." At last the hot, scalding tears began to come, and he sobbed himself to sleep, thinking of the

cruel world and the unkind people in it. No one cared for him, he was sure. Everybody hated him. He was no good anyway. How his lonely heart did ache for just one friendly word from some one. So he slipped off into a troubled sleep.

CHAPTER V

A HARD DECISION

"AND-A the chutes is tame now," Bill explained to his friends at dinner. "It ought to be at least twenty feet higher to be any fun."

"It is thirty-six feet now," exclaimed "Love." "Gee, I would n't slide down it for anything if it was that high."

"You got brave about that chute awfully quick, Bill Ruthford," called Durbin across the table. "It was only yesterday you were afraid to even slide down the one we have. Now you want it twenty feet higher. Bill, you 're a marvel."

"And he would n't have slid down it yesterday if Dale had n't pushed him off," volunteered Longley, jokingly.

"It 's a mean trick to shove any one off of there," added Studley. "It 's all right to have fun, but such monkey business as that squabble on the raft this morning

makes me disgusted. It does n't seem like Dale will ever learn. Not even by experience.

"What 's he been doing now?" questioned Porter.

"The Twins were out in a boat," continued Studley. "And along comes Dale in a boat also. He bet the Twins they could n't keep him from landing on the raft. The Twins took him up, and the fight began. By and by Dale got mad and attempted to clear the deck with an oar. In his rage he took a smash at Vincent, missed him, and struck the raft. Of course the blade of the oar flew off, and now the Twins have to pay for it. It was their oar, and when they turned in the pieces they just asked how much it would be. Was n't that just like them?"

"And-a they are dead easy," broke in Bill. "I would n't 'a' paid a cent if it was n't my fault."

"The Twins know what they 're doing," cried "Shrimp." "If they had made a fuss over that oar to the 'chief,' then Dale would have gotten in bad again, and you

know what the 'chief' said last night. 'One more misdemeanor, and you go home, Dale.' "

"Gee, that oar will cost the kids a dollar, won't it?" giggled "Love." "How are they going to get it? My dad would n't give me a dollar for a busted oar. He 'd just use the busted part on me good and plenty."

"O, they will get it all right," added Studley. "And they won't have to ask their dad for it, either. They have earned most of it already."

"How did they earn it?" asked Porter, at once interested.

"Why, they caught fifty live frogs and sold them over at the hotel for bass-bait. O, they are n't so slow. They always have money. You know they get every fellow's cheese-cloth when he leaves camp, and then, when a new boy comes, they get out their supply and sell him what he needs at reduced rates."

"And that is n't all," added Durbin. "They get out in the morning and dig worms every day, and then sell them.

Money! Why, they are the best business men in camp. Have you ever seen them broke? Not on your life."

Dale was late to supper that evening. In fact he did not return to camp until nearly seven o'clock. Needless to say that was the straw that broke the camel's back. The "chief" refused to give him another chance, and it was now plainly a case for the camp council to deal with. Accordingly the ball-game after supper was cut short and a special meeting of the council called. They met promptly down on the "meditation log," with every member present. The "chief" outlined the case briefly, and without making any suggestions turned the matter over to the council. There was a thorough discussion of all Dale's offenses; then the case was made out and written down. It was the opinion of the majority that Dale was at the end of his rope, but just what to do no one knew exactly. They hated to send him home, because no boy had ever yet been sent home for misconduct. Yet he had had chance after chance, with no improvement.

Vincent had been elected to the council from Tent One to fill a vacancy, and he was very decided in his opinion that, bad as Dale was, he should have another chance.

"You fellows want to remember he has n't any home, and he just do n't fit, that 's all. If we send him away, he will forever after be a knocker. We can't afford to have one."

His argument was convincing, and before he had finished the rest thought as he did, with the result that a compromise was effected.

"We have got to save Dale, and the camp, too," said Cooper, slowly. "And it 's going to be an awfully tough job. But let 's try." So it was decided. For Dale's own good he was to have the choice of two things. He could either stand before the camp and confess his mistakes and ask for one more chance, or he could go home. He should choose.

Dale was brought before the council and given a chance to state his side of the case, but he was sullen, and declined to talk.

Then Mr. Cooper gave him a few suggestions and told him the decision of the court. He threw back his head and in defiance declared, with scarcely a moment's hesitation, that he would choose to go home.

The council adjourned, and the campfire was lighted, but a mysterious sadness had fallen on the crowd. It was the first real serious case of discipline for that summer, and it had its effect. The usual call for songs was only half-hearted, and for the very first evening since camp opened the Eberhart yell was omitted. The "chief" had the brief evening devotion, and his remarks only deepened the quietness that had settled. Every fellow went to bed thinking. No doubt there were many resolutions that night to be more unselfish and to think more often of the other fellow.

Dale lingered in the shadows and did not take the usual evening dip. He was utterly unhappy and discontented. His pride was having a fierce struggle with his

judgment. His whole heart was full of rebellion, yet he was determined. "He would go home, back to the city, and tell his father he had n't had a good time; that that was why he was coming home. He would pack that very night and slip off on the early morning train, before the others were awake." He was just starting toward his tent, when he was startled by voices in the darkness. He had thought he was alone.

"Wait a minute, old man," came from the shadows, but the voice seemed unfamiliar. Dale paid no attention, yet his heart beat a little faster. "Old man"—it sounded strange to him just then. "Who was there that cared enough for him to call him 'old man?' That was what Vincent called his brother."

"I say, Dale, old scout," came another voice from the darkness. Dale stopped and turned. In a very shaky voice he asked what they wanted.

The Twins emerged from the bushes and caught up with him.

"You fellows are almighty friendly all at once, now that you know I 'm going home," said Dale, bitterly.

"Now, do n't get excited," cautioned Harold. "You 're making a lot of fuss over nothing, 'cause you are n't really going home at all. You just think you are."

"I 'm not, huh!" snapped Dale. "I 'll show you."

"Now look here, Dale," began Vincent. "We know just how you feel about it all, but you are wrong, and what we came out here for just now was to tell you we want you to stay."

"You want me to stay!" exclaimed Dale. "Why—"

"Yes, I know it seems strange to you; but honest, old man, we do. It 's going to be hard to stand up and square yourself, but it 's the thing to do, and we want to help you make it as easy as we can."

"And I want to say, too, that I 'm sorry if I have n't always treated you right, and that it was a mean trick of me to take your bait that morning, but I only did it for fun."

"Will you stay?" questioned Harold, earnestly.

Dale dropped his eyes, for the tears were coming. He wanted to say "Yes," but his pride, his selfishness would not let him.

"No, I 'm going home," he sobbed; then broke and ran, leaving the Twins alone in the darkness.

He had been lying quietly in his bunk for half an hour, thinking and thinking. The camp had been quiet for some time. The night was silent except for the mournful hooting of an owl and the spasmodic music of a host of crickets. He was just dozing when he heard a gentle footstep outside. Then a dark form squatted at the end of his bunk. He could not see who it was in the darkness, but it said in a low whisper that he could hardly hear:

"Dale, are you asleep?" He listened, and again it came. He could not be mistaken. "Are you asleep, Dale?"

"No, sir. What is it?"

"It 's just me," replied Cooper. "I could n't sleep until I had had a word with

you. I thought probably you would be awake. I just wanted to say to you, Dale, do the hard thing. There are a lot of us here, old man, that believe in you and want to see you make good. It is an awful thing to turn down an opportunity to prove yourself a man. Do n't be blinded by selfish motives, boy. Do the thing that 's right, even if it is the hardest thing you ever did in all your life. I 'm counting on you to win. Good-night!"

The figure rose to go. Dale clenched his fists. He was truly between two fires. He had dared to think he might—yet he had decided.

"But I 'm going, Mr. Cooper. I 've packed my trunk." He burst into tears and buried his head deep in the bedclothes.

Mr. Cooper stood a long time listening to the night sounds. He wanted so much to help; but how could he? That was the question. At last he slipped silently into his tent and to bed, comforted that he had at least tried.

Dale was up and dressed early the next morning. Instead of putting on his khaki

clothes as usual, he dressed in his city suit. His face was still set and determined. He looked out over the lake. It had never seemed so beautiful or inviting before. He looked up the hill toward the lodge, and all of his good times during the past two weeks came to his mind. He was not hungry, so asked to be excused from breakfast. At devotions he kept his eyes on the ground and said not a word to any one.

The "chief" spoke to him privately, telling him to be sure to settle his account before the wagon came. "You must have everything in readiness before ten o'clock."

Dale had hoped that the "chief" would ask him to stay. He thought he could do it if the fellows just teased real hard, but they did n't seem to care. He was disappointed. At half past nine he came to the "chief" and in a half defiant way asked if he could n't square himself with him instead of with the whole camp. The "chief" took him into the office, and together they talked it over.

"No, Dale," replied the "chief." "I would n't dare to do such a thing, even if

it were in my power, which it is not. It would be unjust to you."

"I don't see how," questioned Dale.

"Because you have not wronged me; you have not disobeyed me or broken my laws at all. It is the camp that you have disgraced—and yourself. It is up to you, my boy, entirely. I can not change it or make it any easier for you."

"I can't stand up before all those fellows," stammered Dale. "I could n't do it to save my life. I am sorry, though, but—" His face flamed, and the old defiance came back. "But it was n't all my fault." He took out his pocketbook, settled his account, and prepared to go. It was twenty minutes after ten, and his ear caught the rumble of the heavy farm wagon coming for his trunk. Down on the beach Dale could see the fellows of his tent preparing their part for the weekly Saturday night stunt fire. He remembered that he had a part in the program. They were counting on him to help. He looked helplessly about him. Two more minutes, and it would be too late. Just

then the Twins landed, holding up three splendid bass. He did want so much to catch some bass. He had started toward the tents, but turned and fled up the hill as fast as his legs could carry him. A strange tremor ran through his body. He straightened his shoulders and threw back his head. He met the "chief" just coming out of his office.

"Call the council, quick, Mr. Howbert," he called out. "Here comes the wagon, and I 've changed my mind. I 'm going to do it. I 'm going to square myself. Then can I stay?" he asked, eagerly.

The "chief" put out his hand. "Put it there, Dale. I 'm glad."

After a few words with Mr. George the wagon turned and went back the way it had come. Dale watched it disappear over the hill, and he was almost sorry he had let it go away again, but there was no turning back now. He slipped into his tent and in a jiffy was into his old camp clothes again. He felt better already.

That noon meal was not soon forgotten in Camp Eberhart, for when the long line

came to attention, the "chief" announced that Dale wanted "to say a word."

He stepped out and faced the line. The room was absolutely quiet. His voice failed him at first, then it came in queer, squeaky tones.

"Fellows, I 'm sorry I did it—and—I want another chance to—make good." He looked appealingly at the crowd.

"Give him a chance," some one shouted. Then applause broke out all along the line.

"And-a I 'll be darned!" exclaimed Bill.

"I told you he would stay," whispered Vincent. "Now let 's help him all we can."

CHAPTER VI

CONCERNING AN ACCIDENT, AND HOW HAROLD MADE GOOD

AFTER breakfast on Saturday the Twins summoned "Love" Collins, Dale Worth, and "Shrimp" Warren to a secret meeting behind the locker-house.

"Gee, fellows," began Vincent, excitedly. "Last night I caught the biggest leather-back you ever laid your lamps on, and I 've got him tied up so he can't get away."

"And what we want with you fellows," added Harold, "is this: Let 's the five of us sneak off, lay a long set-line, and catch enough turtles for the camp dinner to-day. We 'll treat the camp to turtle meat. What do you say? They 're awful hard to dress, but me an' Vincent will show the rest of you how, so you can help. We 'll be a regular gang like goes after

whale and seals, and we 'll catch a whole boat load. Will you go?"

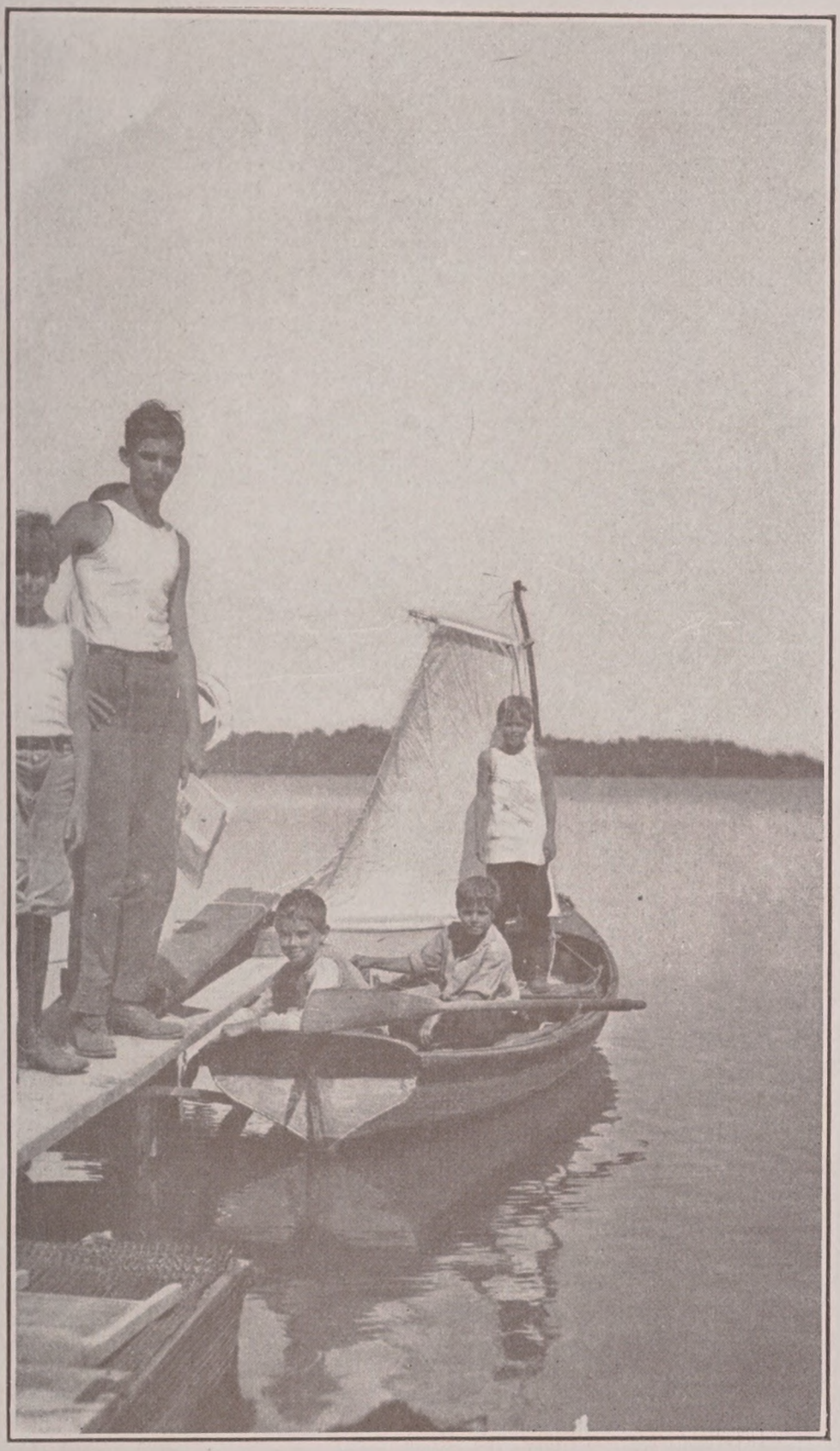
"I got lots of big hooks," cried "Shrimp."

"I got about a mile of heavy string," added Dale.

In a few moments the details were arranged, and the turtle ship slipped quietly out of the harbor and made for the high seas. Vincent was captain and gave orders like a veteran. The hooks were baited with dead fish, sinkers attached, and the long line stretched from the island to the mainland.

At ten o'clock *The Dingbat* and her crew returned to the line. With due ceremony they hoisted the cable and skidded the monsters in on the deck, where they were made fast by Captain "Rocky." One after another the great, sleepy fellows were pulled in, until there were nine in the hull of the craft. "Love" was kept busy keeping them in the bottom of the boat, while the others operated the set-line and rebaited the hooks.

The boys were mightily pleased when at



The good ship "Dingbat" quietly slipped out of the harbor.

dinner time Cooper proposed three rousing cheers for *The Dingbat* and her crew. The turtle, cooked to a delicious brown, was an appetizing morsel as well as a novelty.

Just after dinner Bill came proudly into camp with a splendid two-pound bass. His face fairly shone with pleasure.

"And-a now I get my Brown Rag," he called out to Cooper. "Have you gotten yours yet?" Mr. Cooper replied that he would have it by night if all went well, and Bill was doubly pleased at the prospect of being awarded his honor at the same time that Cooper was to receive his.

Saturday was receiving day at camp, and always brought a few parents to spend Sunday. Therefore every boy waited anxiously for the noon wagon to arrive, in the hope that his mother or father might come.

It was just a week since the Botting boys had arrived, yet they wondered why the new fellows should look so shy and ill at ease. They sized them up, each one separately, and on the whole were satisfied. One new arrival they promptly

dubbed "Fat," and another "Specks" because of his heavy gold-rimmed spectacles; while a third earned the title of "Cow's Tail" before he had been in camp a day, because he was always behind.

The little launch from across the lake had been at the camp in the morning, and, much to the delight of every boy, Mr. Blaine had arranged a water-ball game on the hotel bathing beach for three o'clock.

Jimmie Vanden was promptly elected captain, and was soon busy picking out his team. The entire camp was to go over in the boats, and the hotel launch was to tow them over. Every camper was to wear his camp emblem and to be above all things a real sport while away from home.

The hotel team had the advantage over the camp nine because they were much heavier, and also because they had had some practice. Still there were reasons for expecting a really good game, for Jimmie was a regular "water-dog" and Martin was by no means slow. Dale could swim under water exceptionally well, and so would make a good base-swimmer.

Both Twins were marvels of agility in the water, and "Shrimp" Warren, in addition to his swimming ability, was a splendid catcher.

Promptly at two-thirty the boats were loaded, and the entire camp departed for the hotel. It was a perfect day, and the water was as quiet as a huge mirror. The guests of the hotel were out in full force and were seated on the beach when the campers arrived. The diamond was already laid off in about three feet of water, the floating bases kept in place by boat anchors. Each base, including home-plate, was marked with a colored flag fastened to a slender stick stuck into the base. The umpire took his place in a boat just back of the pitcher.

The camp team, all in white, sleeveless jerseys and black trunks, clean and spotless from the morning's washing, lined up on the beach and, aided by the other campers, gave a rousing Eberhart yell, followed by three cheers for the hotel team; then like clock-work they ran to the beach, dived, and swam to their various positions.

The camp had their outs, with Martin pitching. The ball was large and very light, which made it the more difficult to throw, besides the water in the pitcher's box was nearly to his waist.

The umpire called the game, and the first ball was pitched, the batter striking at it with his open hand. Anything within striking distance was counted a strike, while everything wild was a ball. A big, fat man was first batter for the hotel, and was an imposing sight, to be sure. His bathing suit was very brilliant: black, with pink stripes running around his rotund body. Because of his nearly bald head he promptly won the title of "Old Baldy." He struck at the ball, but, unfortunately for him, it was clear out of reach.

"Strike one!" called the umpire, while the campers danced with excitement.

"And-a shut your eyes and throw the ball," called out Bill to the pitcher. "He 's so big you can't miss him." The crowd howled with delight, then went crazy with enthusiasm as the batter fairly met the ball and sent it out to center field. Dale was

playing that position. Like a shot he was after the ball. Reaching it, he disappeared under water, not to come up until he had reached "Old Baldy," who was making desperate efforts to reach second. "Baldy's" wind was already gone, and he was spurting lake water like some great whale. Dale, carrying the ball in one hand, grabbed "Baldy's" leg and pulled him under, but in the skirmish he let go of the ball. There was a shout, a wild scramble, and for a few seconds it was a question whether Baldy would get out alive or not, for several players had taken his bald head for the white water-ball, and were doing their best to get it away from one another. Finally the real ball was secured, "Baldy" was touched out, and a new batter stepped up to the plate.

The "dean" was on first, and his long, lean body was especially adapted to the position, for just at first base the bottom stepped off. Time and again a shorter man would have lost the ball in this deep water, while the "dean" would simply reach out and take hold of it.

The second batter popped up a good fly, and, being an expert swimmer, made first with very little effort. On the first ball he stole second, and on the second strike "Shrimp" lost the ball, while the man on second ducked, to appear a moment later at third.

The third man up fanned out, making two out, and the next batter knocked an easy fly right into Martin's hands.

The "dean" was first up for the camp and knocked a two-bagger to start with. Then followed two outs. Longley bunted and got safe to first, while the "dean" stole second by outwitting the shortstop.

Vincent was up to bat—two outs and no runs. The camp boys shouted all manner of advice to him until the pitcher had trouble in placing the ball. Vincent was so small he was hard to find, consequently he got his base on balls. Harold followed him to the bat.

"Now, old boy, soak her out," called Dale.

"And-a kill it, kid," shouted Bill.

"Strike one!" called the umpire.

"Strike two!" came a second later. Harold dug his feet into the wet sand and prepared to make his last attempt, conscious that his reputation was at stake. The ball went wild. He had another chance. He swung his arm hard, then, suddenly changing his mind, he bunted. The ball fell dead in front of home-plate, but Harold was gone. The catcher made a dive for it and missed it, his splash sending it floating far back of home-plate. He swam after it, then hurled it to first, but Harold was already there and the "dean" safely home. The first-baseman got excited and threw the ball wildly to third. Third missed it, and Vincent stole third. Harold ducked, swam wide, and popped up at second just in time to see the ball go to the pitcher. He was safe.

The crowd went wild. The first score had been made, and there were two men on bases. The camp team promptly lost their heads in the excitement, while the hotel tightened up their play, with the result that the inning closed one to nothing, in favor of the camp.

In the next inning the hotel ran in three runs and were getting down to business better every minute. "Baldy" was certainly a wide-awake catcher, even if he did keep every player doubled up with laughter, for he would stop the game now and then to mop the top of his bald pate with a big, red turkish towel, which he kept on the end of the pier.

"Love" became so interested in "Baldy's" antics that he forgot to keep score, and as a result, at the fifth inning, much to "Love's" embarrassment, all of the players rushed out of the water to argue half a dozen points that had been lost in the fun. The hotel pitcher grew angry in his excitement. "Baldy" promptly grabbed him by the neck and escorted him to the bath-house. As he was hurried away he muttered that he would come over to the camp and clean out the entire establishment later in the day.

The next two innings were hard fought, neither side making a single score, and again the excitement had grown intense. It had seriously disabled the hotel team

when their pitcher was put out, yet they fought on, substituting man after man in an effort to shut out the campers. The "dean" made a good hit, and by skillful playing managed to make a score on it, so that in the eighth inning it was only three to two in the hotel's favor.

In the last inning Dale did splendid work, keeping his head in a remarkable fashion for him, while Martin did great work in the box. Mr. Verne was well-nigh impassable in his position at first, and "Shrimp" did himself credit.

The hotel was out, and the camp had their last bats, but fell down miserably, three men fanning in quick succession. The game was over and the camp had been beaten, but on the whole it was a splendid game and greatly enjoyed by all. Dale declared he had not had such a good time ever before in his life. Bill was very sure that he had drunk most of Corey Lake, but was not so full that he declined Mr. Cooper's invitation to eat ice-cream at the den on the way home.

"So long, 'Baldy,'" shouted the Twins

in unison as they clambered into their boat.

"Come again, kids!" shouted back the jovial fat man. "Come, and bring your knitting."

The little fleet was soon homeward bound, each boat filled with happy youngsters. Without exception, every boat was headed straight for the little ice-cream parlor, every boy with an ice-cream appetite. In less than no time the small room was full of noisy boys, each shouting their order to the bewildered clerk at the soda fountain.

"I want a bald-headed sundae," shouted Vincent.

"Give me a pitcher's delight," called "Shrimp," while Harold refused everything but a Camp Eberhart special, made according to his own directions.

In one corner there was a clinking of water-glasses, while a friendly toast was pledged to "Old Baldy." At one table each boy ordered a different kind of sundae. Then they were all rotated round the table, each boy taking a good spoonful

from every dish as it passed him. "Fat" had just devoured two sodas and was ordering a third when his leader interfered. One small boy had just discovered how easy it was to spray the whole crowd with warm soda-pop from a bottle he was vigorously shaking.

The "chief" entered and worked his way through the happy throng to Dale.

"Say, Dale, will you stop at the grocery on your way home, present this order, and get two bushels of potatoes? There 's not a one in camp, and also get the corn for our corn-roast to-night." Dale was pleased to think that the "chief" had chosen him, and he could not help showing his pleasure. At the water's edge there was a good-natured water fight in progress, but after a little coaxing, Dale "Love," and Harold were allowed to embark for the grocery. They had gotten hardly a hundred feet from the shore when Vincent came running down the pier, shouting at the top of his voice. He was very indignant at being left behind, for was he not the captain of the good ship *Dingbat?*

The boat came back and tried in vain to take him aboard, but the fellows on the pier refused to let them land.

"Go on and get those Irish lemons!" shouted Durbin.

"Be sure you do n't buy popcorn for the corn-roast," advised Longley. Dale took charge and ordered the ship out, leaving Vincent behind, a move which he afterward regretted.

"Do n't get those potatoes wet, or they will sprout," was the last advice from the shore.

It was with considerable effort that the potatoes and corn were loaded into the boat. And had the good ship been manned by her rightful captain, no doubt he would have noticed as they pulled out into deep water that she was considerably overloaded. But what did an unruly crew of mutineers care about safety on such a day, with a howling band of pirates not more than a mile behind them, ready at any moment to swoop down upon them and capture their precious cargo.

"Pull like Sam Hill!" ordered the self-appointed captain. "We 'll never get to camp with a potato if they catch up with us."

"O shucks!" cried Harold. "We have all the ammunition. Two bushels of cannon-balls and ten dozen ears of 'canister.' What more do you want?"

"Hey, you rube, quit your splashing," cried Dale from his place in the bow.

"I 'm not splashing," retorted Harold. "It 's the waves, and they 're coming over the edge."

The heavily laden little craft had slipped out from the lee of the long point now and was just entering the rough water. A sharp wind had sprung up from the west, and the lake was growing more choppy every minute. The boys pulled hard, but were making no headway. In fact it was difficult to even keep the boat headed in the right direction. The wind was fast carrying them out into the middle of the lake, while every few strokes a white-cap would splash over the bow into the boat.

There was already three or four inches of water in the bottom.

"Hey, you, 'Love,' get busy," ordered Dale, "and bail out that water."

"What with?" asked "Love," excitedly.

"With a bucket or something," said Dale, not realizing how absurd the statement was.

Just then a great wave struck the boat squarely, wetting Harold from head to foot. Dale completely lost his head and likewise his good humor, while the boat floundered in the trough of the wave.

"Pull, pull!" shouted Dale, but he was more interested in the amount of work Harold was doing than in his own efforts.

Things began to look very serious for the boys. The sun had slipped behind a leaden cloud, and a distinct chill had crept into the now strong wind. They were in the midst of a real squall, and were drifting farther into it every moment. "Love" pulled off his shoe and bailed water for dear life. Dale shouted all kinds of orders, then did exactly the opposite. Harold pulled, then backwatered, doing his best to

keep the boat in the line of the wind, for he clearly realized their danger. Strange as it may seem, the thought of lightening the boat by dumping overboard some of their cargo had not occurred to any of them.

"Sit still!" growled Dale. "Do you want to tip us over?" The big basket of green corn behind him had shifted to one side considerably.

"I am still," retorted Harold. "Sit still yourself, and keep your end around square."

A great wave was coming swiftly toward them, its white crest dancing gleefully. Dale gave a mighty pull. As it struck his oar-lock slipped from its socket and he was tumbled over backwards with the force of his stroke. The basket slipped on to one gunwale, and in an instant the boat was taking water. "Love" grabbed desperately for the rail and caught the edge just as the boat went over. In an instant all were in the water—boys, oars, potatoes, corn. The bags of potatoes sank like stones, while the corn floated on the

water, and the basket, bottom-side up, sped away before the wind.

Dale, who was a good swimmer, struck out blindly, never turning to see what had become of his companions. "Love" gave one cry and disappeared in the water. Harold heard him and turned quickly. He saw "Love" come to the surface just ahead of him.

"Can you keep up?" he cried.

"Not long," returned "Love." "My clothes are so heavy."

"If I come to you, you will drown both of us," gulped Harold. A big wave rolled over him, and when he again caught sight of "Love" he was some distance away.

"Keep up your nerve," he shouted. "I 'm coming." Then he caught sight of the empty boat, bottom-side up, and in a flash he was after it.

"Swim toward me," he called to "Love," as he went after the boat, which had turned broadside to the waves and was being tossed up and down in the troughs. In a moment he reached it and began to

push it toward "Love," shouting all the while, "I 'm coming."

"Now, do n't grab me," he ordered, when close to "Love." "Grab the boat and hold on. It will hold us both up." "Love" did as he was directed, holding on to one end while Harold held to the other. They were drifting very fast now, and for the first time looked about them. It seemed ages since the boat had tipped over. The waves were too high to see far, but somewhere they heard a shout, and in another moment they saw a boat coming toward them.

"Stick tight, old boy! We 're coming."

"Hang on for dear life," came a shrill, excited tone.

"It 's Cooper," gulped Harold, but "Love" did not answer, and Harold turned just in time to see "Love" loose his hold and slip below the surface of the water.

He gave a cry of fright, cut loose from the floating boat, and dived where he had seen "Love" go down. Cooper saw him disappear, and a great lump came into his

throat. He was nearly exhausted from the tremendous efforts of his row. Every one of his mighty muscles quivered. He handed the oars to Vincent and was just about to dive when Harold came to the surface, one hand firmly holding "Love" by the hair. In an instant Cooper had them in his arms and was lifting them into the boat. Meanwhile Mr. Blaine arrived in a second boat, and the next thing the boys knew they were tucked away in warm blankets in the camp lodge.

Mr. Cooper and Vincent sat quietly by Harold's bed, and Mr. Blaine by "Love's." Harold awoke first, and started with a cry. "Where 's 'Love?' " he asked with his first breath, as a frightened look came into his face.

"He 's all right, old boy. Go easy now," cautioned Cooper.

"And Dale?" he asked.

"O, Dale is all right, too," answered Vincent. "He swam until Mr. Blaine picked him up in the boat." A smile came to Harold's face, then he closed his eyes again for a little while. In a few minutes,

however, he insisted on sitting up, and after drinking a bowl of warm soup that the chef had prepared for him he felt stronger. "Love" now awakened from his sleep, and the first thing that caught his eye was a big yellow wasp buzzing away on the window screen.

"Gee, he 's a big one," he murmured, then giggled his happy little giggle, but without the usual life in it.

"I suppose he belongs to the order of stingers, do n't he, Mr. Cooper?"

"You better be quiet," suggested Mr. Blaine, and "Love" quietly settled back on his pillow.

"Gee, but I did have the cramps," he whispered, confidentially. "I just could n't hold on another jiffy." Then he turned toward Harold in the next bed. "You 're a regular kingfisher, Harold; you grabbed me just like you were hungry."

"Now I won't get a chance to light my fires to-day," moaned Harold, and I had counted so on getting my Brown Rag to-night, along with Mr. Cooper."

"Not to-day, I guess," sympathized Mr.

Cooper. "But there will be other Saturdays."

"O, it's stunt night, too, isn't it?" sighed "Love." "Have we got to stay here all evening, while you fellows have all the fun, just because we got a ducking?"

"We'll see," said Mr. Blaine, good-naturedly. "You go to sleep again, if you can, and if you feel real good by night we'll wrap you in blankets and take you to the fire; but mind, not unless you go to sleep right now."

"I'd sleep a week before I'd miss those stunts to-night," confided "Love." "They will be great, won't they?"

Mr. Blaine held up a finger for quiet, then silently left the room.

CHAPTER VII

THE STUNTS AND HAROLD'S REWARD

IT was an excited group of boys that gathered about the big stunt-fire that evening. There was but one real subject of talk among the fellows, and that was the accident on the lake, and its hero, Harold Botting.

Mr. Blaine had held a secret conference with Cooper and the "chief," and they had agreed that for Dale's own sake they would not mention the fact that in the excitement of the moment he had forsaken the smaller boys and thought only of his own safety. He had been picked up far from the other boys, swimming hard, and had offered no explanation as to why he had left the scene of the accident.

"If Harold tells it, we can do nothing," Mr. Blaine had said.

"But he 's too much of a sport to say a

word about it," replied Mr. Cooper, "and I do n't believe 'Love' has ever thought of it. If the fellows find it out, Dale is done for here."

Harold and "Love" were kept wrapped in their blankets, much to their disgust, while the other fellows did the usual cheering and singing, ending that part of the program with a wild dance about the fire, then three rousing cheers for Harold, "Love," and Dale. For some reason that no one exactly understood, enthusiasm was lacking when it came to the cheer for Dale. He was gloomy and stood apart, not entering into the real fun of the occasion.

The yells were all over and the stunts were just about to begin, it being the custom that each tent give a stunt on stunt night, when Harold from his seat by a big tree cried out:

"You sap-heads, you forgot 'Baldy.' Now whoop 'er up."

This was the starter for a second spasm of yells, and it was fully twenty minutes before order was again restored.

"We want to hear about the accident," shouted half a dozen fellows. "We want a speech from 'Portage,'" howled the crowd. "Speech! Speech!"

Harold became bashful and declined. He did not like such popularity, for he, like the real hero that he was, was unconscious that he had done anything so wonderful except just to do his duty. If Mr. Blaine would have allowed it, Harold would have been snatched up and carried on many shoulders to the circle of fire-light. But he intervened and urged the fellows to go easy.

Mr. George, having heard of the events of the afternoon, had come over to enjoy the evening's fun and to hear more of the accident. As was his custom, he brought with him a bushel of apples. Now, in order to divert the boys' attention from Harold, he rose and, picking up the basket, passed down the line, allowing every boy to help himself. Then Harold told very briefly and in a straight-forward manner just how the accident had occurred, giving "Love" and Dale great credit for the way

they had kept their heads and showed their nerve, ending by casting all the glory for their rescue on Cooper. Cooper rose hastily and corrected the story, giving the details their true proportion. He made it very clear that he had done nothing praiseworthy and had come awfully near being too late to even help at all. There were three last rousing cheers for Harold; then the stunts began.

The stunts were certainly worth all the effort that had been put into them. Tent One had a take-off on the chef and his method of serving the daily food. They got off many of his set expressions, much to the delight of all.

Tent Two burlesqued Mr. Blaine's lessons in First Aid to the Injured, and kept the entire camp roaring with good-natured laughter at the treatment given the different patients. They were especially delighted when the practicing physicians declared that a mustard poultice on "Fat's" round stomach was the only thing that would cure his headache. But when they said that two large doses of castor-oil

would cure any corn, the amusement knew no bounds.

Tent Three gave a modern operation for appendicitis. The patient, moaning and crying, was brought in on a stretcher. First a very learned French doctor was called for the sick man, and after a long and careful examination of the patient's pocketbook he declared the case was not appendicitis at all, but a bad case of cancer. The nurses, not being satisfied, called in a prominent German specialist, who after due deliberation declared it appendicitis. It was decided to operate; so things were prepared. A nurse brought in, in a wheelbarrow, a saw, a hammer, a brace and bit, a crowbar, and a box of nails. With the help of the above instruments the opening was finally effected, and the strange things that were removed from that patient's body! Sixteen wieners in a long string, a small ham, and two loaves of bread, a live kitten, a young duck, and a rusty horseshoe.

"I told you so once alreaty," declared the German doctor. "You see now it was

the appendix, ain't it?" The Frenchman paid no attention to these remarks, but seemed lost in further investigation. Finally, with a shout, he produced a bright and shining tin-can. Presenting it with great ceremony to the German doctor, he said, "Et ees, you see, as I said at the beginning, a can-sir." The crowd went wild with delight and applauded long and vigorously. It was the best yet.

Mr. Cooper's tent came next and represented Mr. Verne having a class in Nature Study, each student bringing some biological specimen to him for identification. It was very clever, and occasioned another great uproar.

Bill Ruthford came tripping in with a large branch in his hand, to which was attached a brown jug. "And-a, Mr. Verne, I found this in the big swamp. Can you tell me what it is?"

The supposed Mr. Verne was greatly surprised at seeing such a specimen in that region, and asked many questions concerning it.

"Yes, William, it is very rare, especially

in this region. I have not seen any of it since leaving the city, and it should be carefully preserved. Its scientific name I do not know, but its common name is 'Anheiser Bush.'"

This was followed with cries of "Rotten!" "Bum joke!" "Drown him!"

The next scholar brought in a mysterious package, carefully tied up. After due ceremony the strings were cut and the package opened, revealing a medium-sized, very-much-alive, hard-shelled turtle. The instructor was delighted, for according to his statement it was a very rare and interesting animal, as well as a dangerous one, its common name being the Norwegian bedbug.

One brought in several small American flags, which the professor declared were splendid specimens of the sweet iris, commonly called flags. Another brought a dozen choice specimens of dead mosquitoes, which the professor pronounced "genuine humming-birds," calling special attention to their dainty, long bills.

The next brought a young garter-snake,

dangling him fearlessly by the tail. This specimen bothered the professor, and it was only after a long and careful examination of his elaborate natural history that he decided that it must be an escaped "noodle from day before yesterday's soup."

Tent Five gave a mock wedding, and Six built several very clever pyramids. Seven had the only troupe of real "coon" minstrels. And so on, until every group had had its chance to entertain.

After the stunts were over, the "chief" stepped into the circle of firelight and motioned for silence. Every boy listened eagerly, for in his hand he held several of the much-coveted Brown and Green Rags, which were simply large silk handkerchiefs with the camp emblem in white on one corner.

"I am especially glad to have the privilege of awarding several Rags to-night," he began, "for it makes me feel good to present a Rag to any of you fellows, because I know it represents a lot of conscientious work on your part. The value

of these Rags is not in themselves, but in what they represent. They are to our camp what the great Yale 'Y' is to Yale, or the famous crimson 'H' is to the Harvard men. They stand for achievement. They represent the hardship overcome. They spell growth to every man who wins one. A fellow can not come into this camp and win either his Brown or Green Rag and still be the same fellow he was before he came, for in receiving his rag he is receiving a certificate for things accomplished, growth in all-round development. I hope that in after years, when you look on your Rag, you will have refreshing memories of shady nooks and wild flowers, of improved athletic records and worth-while hikes into the country, of woodcraft learned and, most of all, of a real fellowship with a crowd of clean, happy, healthy fellows.

"I am especially glad to-night to present to Mr. Cooper his Brown Rag, and his Green Rag, too. He has worked hard for both of them. Cooper, the Green Rag represents the highest honor this camp can

give a camper. It stands for *leadership* in all that word implies, and I know you gladly accept the obligation that this Rag imposes."

Cooper stepped forward, received his Rags, and at the urgent demand for a "speech" made a few remarks. All eyes were turned upon him admiringly.

Bill Ruthford and several others were then presented with their Brown Rags, each one in turn repeating Cooper's speech of acceptance, much to the amusement of the crowd.

Harold was looking on with wistful eyes, for he had counted so much on getting his Brown Rag at the same time as Cooper and Vincent got theirs. He would get it next week, though, and meanwhile do a lot of work toward his Green one.

The "chief" still stood in the firelight, waiting for the happy chatter to cease. He seemed to have something more to say. When the crowd had quieted down he put his hand into his sweater pocket and pulled out a small package, which he held

before him in his hand. Then, in quiet, well-measured tones, he began:

"Fellows, I believe that you will agree with me that the boy who gets most out of this camp is the fellow who puts most into it. The fellow who is willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of the other fellow is the boy that we most admire, for it takes real manhood to be unselfish.

"To-day has been a day that will not soon be forgotten by some of us. To-night we have a boy in this camp who has shown us a splendid bit of the unselfish spirit, purchased at the risk of his own life." All eyes were turned toward Harold.

"Every one of you has read over and over again the requirements for our Camp Honor System, and you will all recall that at the end this note is added: 'Upon the unanimous vote of all members of the Green Rag Society, a Green Rag, representing the highest honor this camp can bestow, may be awarded to a camper without requiring the necessary tests of him, for the saving of a human life.' Little did

the council that made that note expect that we would be given a chance to take advantage of it so soon. Harold"—and the "chief" unwrapped the package in his hand, revealing a Green Rag—"we consider it an honor to be able to give you this Rag, and in this little way show how we, as a camp, regard an unselfish act such as you performed to-day."

There was a deafening shout of applause and a final "Three cheers for 'Portage!'" "Love" slipped his arm around Harold's shoulder and giggled his delight. The "chief" noticed that Dale Worth was nowhere to be seen, and wondered at it.

The fire had burned low now and was just a heap of glowing embers. The crowd broke up. Some went to bed, others sat around the dying fire telling stories, for on "stunt-night" the general rule of "all quiet at nine" was suspended. Many of the fellows looked forward to the story hour with even more interest than to the stunts. To-night a special treat was promised them in the presence of Mr. George, who, without exception, held first place

when it came to stories. The boys cuddled up close to the fire and became quiet.

"Mr. George, won't you tell us some more stories about this lake when the Indians were here?" asked Harold.

"Yes, do," seconded "Love," from his blanket. "Yes, yes," came from the whole group.

Mr. George perched himself comfortably at the end of a big log and laughed good-naturedly.

"Well, by jolly, boys, I hardly know what to tell you about. I've told you about the 'sea-serpent' we used to have here when I was a boy, and about the old log schoolhouse that used to stand at the end of Little Corey. That's where I got all my schoolin'. The times us kids used to have there beats your good times nowadays all to smithereens." For a moment he was lost in reviewing in his mind the stories he had told them.

"Tell us about the old fellow that believed he could turn stones to gold," whispered Harold.

"Yes, that's the one," echoed "Love."

"About the old fellow that saved stones, eh? Well, there ain't much to tell you boys about him. He was gone several years before our family came here to live, but I recollect hearin' a good deal about him. He was the very first white man in this region, I think, and was the man that homesteaded this farm. He built the main part of my house years and years ago, and set out our old orchard. He was sort of an Indian trader, I think, and made his living by tradin' with the Indians for their furs. He was the first white man to live on this lake, and when he came all this open country was the most beautiful forest I have ever seen. This ground where the camp is now, was in them days covered with great oaks and whitewoods, lots of 'em six feet through. When I came, as a boy, with my father, they still stood, the only clearing being the strip up where my garden is now. Father used to send me into the big timber in the evenings after the cows, and many times I 've been awfully scared.

"The first job my father gave me to do

when we got to the old cabin was to shovel out several bushels of small, round stones like you see here on the beach. They were piled in every corner of the cabin. He told me then that this old man—Thomson was his name—had lost his mind some years before he died, and one of the foolish things that he believed was that he could at a certain season of the moon turn stones into gold. The Indians were afraid of him and thought he was a great 'medicine man.' When I was a boy like Harold there, I remember a fellow that lived away over north of here—he 's been dead now fifty years—that used to tell how Thomson would stop him on the trail, and in a very mysterious way show him several stones he had in his pocket, and explain to him that they were just about ready to turn into nuggets.

"They say that before he went crazy his wife left him, and the only companions he had were a couple of Indians that lived with him. They thought at one time that he must have left a lot of money hid somewhere around the lake here, but most all

the old-timers are gone now, and Thomson has nearly been forgotten.

"They tell how the old man used to paddle around the lake in a canoe, day in and day out, without a stitch of clothing on, a great knife in his hand, looking for an immense sturgeon that the spirits told him inhabited the lake. This fish was to be his if he was just patient in hunting it, and when he captured it he was to find in its stomach a great fortune in pearls.

"He dug a funny-looking hole in the island, and used to spend lots of his time there. Twice the neighbors found him roaming the woods in the middle of the night, carrying in each hand a lighted torch of fat pine. He declared he was hunting down evil spirts. He finally got to be a nuisance in the neighborhood, for he refused to clothe himself and often frightened folks badly at night. Imagine driving home from Three Rivers—that was the closest village in the early days, and the road ran all the way through dense forest. Imagine yourself on a load of supplies, night closing in around you, then

suddenly to hear a piercing shriek from somewhere in the timber, followed by moans and groans. It was always that old fellow somewhere in the woods, killing imaginary enemies and chasing evil spirits with shotgun and blazing torch. One fall the neighbors drove him from the country, and that spring his frozen body was found in the deep woods ten miles north of here. He claimed to know a secret passage from the lake to the St. Joe River, but I think it was just another of his notions.

"When I was a young man, I remember one time a cow strayed from the herd I was driving, and wandered away into the timber south of here. When I was looking for her I came on to a saddle and bridle hung high in a tree. I brought them home, and a farmer that was an old-timer in these parts told me they had belonged to an Indian that had mysteriously disappeared from the Thomson place. He was a mighty strange old fellow, that's sure. Probably lost his mind over some crime he had committed, and had come into the great wilderness from the East to escape

the law. There was a lot of such characters in Southern Michigan in early days."

The fire had burned almost out, and the big harvest moon had risen out of the lake away to the other shore, making a golden pathway across the rippling waters.

"Tell us another," begged Durbin, as he arose and kicked the last few embers together.

"No, boys; no more to-night," said Mr. George. "I must be gettin' home. It won't be long before it 's time for me to get up, and I have n't gone to bed yet." Then turning to Harold and "Love," he said, "Hope you boys won't be none the worse for your bath to-day."

"Come again!" shouted the boys as the old gentleman disappeared in the darkness.

"Thanks for the apples, Mr. George!" called Cooper.

"Gee, ain't he swell?" said "Shrimp," as he rose and stretched his cramped legs.

"And-a come on, kids, let 's turn some rocks into gold," remarked Bill as they moved down the beach toward the tents.

CHAPTER VIII

SUNDAY IN CAMP EBERHART

IT was Sunday in camp, and the boys were making the most of the extra half-hour before breakfast by especially careful toilets. Clean shirts and khaki trousers were gotten out, hair was carefully combed, and some of the more particular fellows even went so far as to put on a necktie. The leaders were busy at their shaving when assembly rang out from the hill. There was a wild scramble from every direction, for assembly meant ten minutes till breakfast, and on Sunday morning breakfast was especially welcomed.

The order of the day was somewhat changed on Sundays. The regular detail was omitted, and likewise the morning devotions, but a wide-awake morning service, at which time some visitor from the city would talk, was held at eleven o'clock.

Camp inspection was changed from one o'clock to nine, and was more rigid than on other days. Somewhere back in the seasons past a precedent had been established that on Sundays camp must be in perfect order, in so far as inspection could determine. So it was with the greatest of difficulty that the pennant was awarded for the best appearing tent. It was a common thing to not be able to award it at all because of general excellence. Woe to the careless fellow in any tent who was the cause of his tent being rated low in Sunday inspection!

There were no Sunday rules in camp. Each camper did anything that his conscience told him was proper for a Sunday, and this made it anything but a dull day. In the morning after inspection the fellows would read or sit around in groups chatting about the events of the coming week, or of the last baseball game, or the possibilities of winning a Rag before the next stunt night. Others wrote letters, for it was the custom that every boy write a letter home on Sunday. Sometimes this was

a very difficult task. At breakfast the "chief" had warned them against writing home too brightly colored accounts of yesterday's accident, explaining that it would do no good, and only uselessly worry parents. He told the three boys most interested that he had already written to their parents, giving them all the necessary details, and that he would advise them to wait till they got home to tell the story.

Bill Ruthford, Durbin, and the Twins were sitting in the library hard at work on their weekly letters home. "Portage" was giving an account of the wonders of water-ball. Vincent was making application for renewed funds. Durbin was proudly telling his fond mother how he had sunburned his shoulders until he could not sleep nights, and how he had broken the rowing record for one mile, single.

Bill sat listlessly looking out of the window, and tapping the table with his pen. Now and then he would read the three or four lines he had written, only to arrive at the same thought each time, namely: what else could he say. He had said he was

well, the weather was fine, and he was having a great time. That was what he had said in every letter since he had come to camp.

As he sat trying to think of just one more news item, a sheep walked slowly aross the field in front of the lodge. Suddenly Bill's face brightened with an inspiration and he wrote hastily, "There is a beautiful sheep just now feeding on the tender grass in the field below." He cautiously looked about to see if any one had seen him write that; then suddenly he snatched the sheet from the table, crumpled it into a wad, and sailed it across the room. Vincent looked up in surprise.

"What 's the matter, Bill?" he asked.

"O, gee, I have n't got a thing to write about. What are you writing about, anyway?"

"O, I 'm just telling about the stunts last night, and about 'Baldy' and the ball-game, and about old crazy Thomson, and about our trip to-morrow to dig up that Indian grave, and about Cooper getting his Rags, and—"

"And-a, O, yes, I nearly forgot all those things," said Bill, as he took a second sheet of paper and began again.

After a long and laborious attempt he asked "Portage" to let him read his letter, so he could get started again.

"I 'm all right if I do n't stop," explained Bill, "but if I stop writing, all I can think of is the weather." After he had read the letter he handed it back with the remark:

"And-a, say, 'Portage,' you 're a peach at letter writing. I could n't write one like that in a hundred years. Say, I 'll give you my reel if you 'll let me copy yours. What do you say?"

The bargain was made, and before long Bill Ruthford was posting the longest, newsiest letter that he had ever written.

At eleven the fellows gathered in answer to the bugle-call and went in a body to a cool spot in the woods, where the morning service was held. The old graphophone was wound up and the favorite sacred music of the camp was played. Then came a splendid, wide-awake talk that was filled

with excellent illustrations that just suited the occasion.

"Gee, that was the best preachin' I ever heard," declared "Love" on his way back to camp.

Dinner was the next attractive event of the day, and was quite a social occasion. The chef loaded down each plate with such a variety of "good eats" that every boy was happy. One poor, unfortunate lad dropped his loaded tray, much to his embarrassment, and was promptly teased nearly beyond endurance about "letting his chicken fly away." Durbin did n't care for his soup, so he traded it to a neighbor for one of his hot rolls. Studley, who was just a little under the weather, sold his ice-cream to Vincent, and Longley turned his delicious leg of fried chicken over to "Shrimp" for his sweet pickle. That promptly called down a shower of jokes about "what 's the matter with a fellow that 's so crazy over sweet pickles."

"And-a did you smell that sweet letter he got yesterday?" questioned Bill.

"No, but I saw him sitting off in the

woods this morning writing a young book to some one."

"O, that was my diary," answered Longley.

"What did you put those two two-cent stamps on it for, then?" asked "Deak," who had charge of the outgoing mail.

Shortly after dinner a crowd of the fellows went with Mr. Verne to ramble in the big woods, and to gather flowers, and to name some trees—incidentally, of course, to feast on the rich, ripe dewberries that were so plentiful just then.

Cooper and Dale went off together to find a few new birds, so that Dale could identify his required number. The assortment of books on the library shelves was thinned out, and every late magazine had mysteriously disappeared. In a short time the lodge and tents were deserted.

"I 've learned more about this great out-of-doors in two weeks than I ever knew in all my life before," Cooper was saying to Dale as they sat on a big log far back in the woods and ate berries from a hatful of the fruit they had gathered.

"I did n't like it at first," was Dale's reply. "It took so much time to do all the work."

"Yes, but do n't you think it 's fine, the spirit of 'help the other fellow' that 's in the camp? I believe that is why fellows out here have such a good time," replied Cooper.

"I never help the other fellow much, though," said Dale. "It 's too much trouble."

"That 's why you are so unhappy and cross and cranky," replied Cooper, not unkindly. "Say, Dale, who do you believe is having the very best time of any one in this camp?" Dale thought a moment, then said, reluctantly, "Why, the Twins, I suppose. They are always laughing and joking, and are at least the most popular fellows."

"And the reason is that they have a good time making fun for the rest of us. They are unselfish to the core."

Dale dug his foot restlessly in the soft dirt. He was thinking. At last he raised his head and looked Cooper square in the eye.

"Mr. Cooper, do you think I could ever be like those kids—I mean happy and helpful and—and unselfish?"

Cooper laughed his good-natured laugh and slapped Dale on the shoulder.

"Why, of course you could, boy, just like them; but to do it you will have to forget absolutely that there is any Dale Worth. You know, after all, I think our religion is mostly just being happy and contented, and making other folks have a good time. You know when I get out here in these old woods I just feel so good that I want to make everybody else happy. You want to bury those frowns and those mean, sharp words, and get into the spirit of nature, then you will begin to live. When you feel like that you will have the best time in the world."

"I 've been thinking about it all day," went on Dale, "that story we heard at the service this morning, about the old lady that always picked up all the broken glass she found in the streets and put it into her pocket, and when the policeman questioned her about it she told him she did it

just to keep the boys from cutting their bare feet. That was great, was n't it, 'Coop?' I 'll bet she was happy." Dale suddenly stood up, threw back his shoulders, and said: "Let 's go back to camp. I want to look for some glass myself."

At three the boats were released, and those who cared to were allowed to row around quietly until supper time.

Longley and "Shrimp" set off to view their different birds' nests, for there were a great many that they were watching from day to day.

"I wonder if the young king birds have flown yet," said "Shrimp." "I heard an awful commotion down by the cat-tails this morning before church. "I 'll bet my hat a turtle has been at that blackbird's nest."

"We must n't tell about the bittern's nest yet, until the eggs hatch, because we want to see the little ones first," cautioned Longley. "It 's great, the way the mother tries to hide in the old, dead cat-tails, is n't it? She is just exactly the same color, and her long, slender neck is the same shape

as those dead reeds. Did you notice that?"

It 's too bad we missed that pair of loons. That would have been a real discovery for us, would n't it?"

"We certainly have seen a lot of new things this year, have n't we? If it was n't for our honor system we would n't care a cent for such things, would we?"

So the hunt for new things went on, each day surrendering some new secret to the boys to add to their ever-increasing store of practical knowledge of nature.

At supper time "Love" was late, and no one had seen him all the afternoon. They were just sitting down to supper, when in he came, panting and puffing. His face fell when he saw he was too late and had forfeited his meal. He held his hands cupped together, and went straight to Mr. Verne.

"I'm so sorry I'm late. I never meant to be, but I found this bug or animal, I do n't know which, and I knew you would want to see it, so I stopped to try to find something to bring it in." He cautiously

opened his hands, giggling all the while. Something jumped out on to Mr. Verne's potato salad. In a second there was a crowd around Mr. Verne. Everybody wanted to see the strange animal with long, slender feelers and claw-like legs. Mr. Verne turned a cup over him and sent the boys back to finish their suppers. He instructed "Love" to wash his hands and get his supper.

"What order is he in?" asked "Love" as he came back with his food. But no one seemed to be able to classify it until the "bug book" was gotten out and carefully examined. It turned out to be a mole-cricket and very rare, so "Love" added another name to his list of discoveries.

Just at twilight all the campers assembled on the beach for the evening devotion. It was a time that was looked forward to by every one, partly because it was novel and partly because it was really enjoyed. The entire camp embarked in the boats and headed straight for the middle of the lake. Here the bows were all tied together and all the boats pulled in

like the spokes of a great wheel. Then the graphophone was wound up and the favorite records played, the boys joining in on the chorus of the more familiar songs. Then came the simple, straightforward talk that was especially related to camp-life and drawn from some passage of the Bible. One night it was birds, another water, another stars. Out there on the calm, beautiful lake, the stars overhead, and good companions all around, many a fellow opened his heart and let in the great truths of the Christ. There was nothing weak or "sissy" about it. It was just a strong, manly appeal for the better things in a boy's life. Then, with a prayer to the Great All-Father, the little service was over and the boats returned to camp.

"Sunday 's the best day of all," said Dale to Cooper as he got into bed. "I know where there 's some glass, and I 'm going to get it first thing in the morning."

CHAPTER IX

THE CLEVER TWINS

SOME time in the night the wind changed to an on-shore breeze, and there came with it, as there always does, a whole host of black storm clouds. Consequently, when the camp awoke next morning, every boy's mind filled with the expectancy of an all-day hike to dig Indian mounds, they were disappointed to find a dark, drizzly morning.

"Rain before seven, clear before eleven," declared Durbin, emphatically. "I never yet saw it fail."

"If there is such a thing as being able to dampen the spirits of a lot of healthy boys, this day ought to do it," observed Jimmie Vanden, as he surveyed the foggy lake, the half-filled boats, and the dripping tent-flies before him.

"Dampen their spirits nothing," blithely challenged Vincent. "This is the best fish-

ing-day we 've had yet. O you string of bass!" and he danced up and down with sheer delight.

"Can't even play ball," grumbled Leonard. "The diamond looks like a bowl of soup."

"Well, you 'd think ball was the only game on earth," called Harold. "Let 's have a war, or a fight, or a real rough house. Let 's not stand around and just be sorry about it all day."

After breakfast a rousing fire was built in the great stone fireplace. The morning detail was quickly dispatched. Then the camp broke up into many small groups, each one occupying itself as it saw fit. The graphophone was pressed into service by those who chose to be by the fire. One group of fellows made kites according to the latest approved methods. Others played checkers, read books, or gathered in twos and threes to "swap lies."

About ten o'clock the sky darkened and the thunder rolled. Brilliant flashes of lightning lighted up the western sky. The fog cleared, and the lake became a stormy

green. The little whitecaps fairly raced across the water, only to be ceaselessly dashed up on to the beach in masses of foam. In less time than it takes to tell it the storm was on full blast. The wind howled angrily. The rain fell in torrents. As the storm increased, the fellows gathered on the broad veranda to watch it, for its great power was fascinating. Every boy stood intently watching the great trees bending and the tents shivering in the storm, expecting at any moment to see them torn from their moorings and blown into the lake.

Vincent stepped over to Cooper and stood by his side for some minutes without speaking, then,—

"Gee, she 's got some pep, has n't she?" he remarked, by way of opening the conversation. "That 's more than we 've got."

"Let 's do something," added Harold. "Cooper, let 's start something quick, or I 'll explode. I 've been standing around all morning."

"Let 's see the Twins wrestle," sug-

gested Porter. The idea met with instant approval. In another moment the big dining-room was being cleared of chairs and tables.

"It 's an awfully hard floor," suggested Cooper. "Better put on your sweater coats, then you won't skin up your shoulders."

"O, rats!" exclaimed Vincent. "A little skinning is n't going to hurt us."

A large ring was quickly formed and the Twins took the center. Harold, however, did n't just like the idea. He was not afraid, or anything like that, but it seemed to him like going back on old times, for ever since they had been old enough to fight at all they had always stuck together. What was one's fight was always the other's also. Now, to be opposing each other, just for the amusement of the crowd, seemed strange to him.

"I 'll bet on Vincent," called "Love," from his place in the circle.

"And I on Harold," promptly returned "Shrimp."

Soon each camper had chosen his cham-

pion, and under the supervision of Mr. Blaine the tussle began. The cook left his pan of potatoes and stood in the doorway to see the fun. The checker game was set hastily aside. Books were closed with a bang. Half-finished letters were slipped out of sight, and the entire camp joined the circle.

The boys were evenly matched, and were, so far as the eye could tell, exactly of a size and shape. Both wore gray sweater coats and black tennis shoes, without stockings. Both had bushy, yellow hair, and both had sparkling blue eyes that fairly danced with life and good humor.

They advanced, met each other, shook hands, and the tussle began. In the quick, catlike movements that followed, the crowd became confused. The ones that had been shouting for Vincent often shouted for Harold, not knowing the difference, and Harold's most ardent admirers clapped their approval of his tactics, when it was really Vincent that had won their favor. The match was so even that after a few moments Mr. Blaine sep-

arated them to rest, giving Harold the advantage.

"Now, which one is which?" asked Dale of "Shrimp" Warren.

"The one standing by Mr. Blaine is Vincent," said "Shrimp."

"Not on your life," objected Longley. "That 's Harold."

"Harold, nothing," shouted Porter. "That 's Vincent. I sleep right over him; I can tell by his slippers. They are worn through at the toes."

"And-a he 's right," said Bill. "I heard him say, Saturday, that his slippers were worn out."

"Well, gee, then I 've been yelling for the wrong man," confided Studley.

"You ought to do like I do," said Stellner. "I yell one minute for one and the next minute for the other, and the one that really wins in the end is the one I thought was the best man all the while."

So the conversation went on while the Twins rested.

The second tussle began, and the excitement rose to a high pitch when one Bot-

ting's foot suddenly slipped and over he went, flat on his shoulders, the Botting with the worn slippers on top.

"Three cheers for Vincent!" shouted Porter. "He 's the winner." The cheers followed, and they were lively ones.

"Three cheers for Harold!" shouted Longley. "He 's the winner." And again the shouts rang out.

The Twins sat panting on the floor and wiped the perspiration from their faces. They had entered into the spirit of the competition, and while they would at any cost be loyal to each other and play absolutely on the square, for the sake of the prestige, however, they both wanted to win, and had gone into the match to win.

"I knew something was the matter with me," panted Harold. "Now I know what it is. You have on my slippers."

"Slippers do n't make any difference," laughed Vincent.

"They do n't, eh? Well, that 's what made me fall just then. Yours are too big for me."

"All right," consented Vincent. "Let 's both take them off for the last fall. What do you say? We each have one advantage now." Harold agreed, and the last tussle began.

"And-a which is which, anyway?" questioned Bill of his neighbor.

"You got me," replied Studley. "I can't tell now till they put on their shoes again. I 'm always getting them mixed up some way."

The last match was a long and exceedingly well-contested one, but finally one Botting, by a clever feint, secured the fateful "half Nelson," and in another instant his opponent was pinned helplessly on his shoulders. The boys shouted their approval, and the Twins pulled on their slippers.

"See, I told you it was Vincent that won," said Porter, pointing to the slippers with the worn-out toes. Bill shook his head doubtfully.

"And-a I 'm glad he did—are n't you?—'cause he worked the hardest."

"Well, old boy, you certainly are some

wrestler," said Cooper to Harold as the group passed out on to the porch again.

"Why—did Harold win?" asked Porter in surprise.

"Sure I did," replied Harold.

"But it was Vincent's shoes that were worn out at the toes—"

"You sap-heads!" laughed Harold. "He had on my shoes when we began, but now I have on my own." Porter looked from one to the other. "Well, I 'll be jiggered," was all he said.

A small group had gathered around Durbin, and they were earnestly talking over some scheme, which, from the suppressed laughter, seemed to please them greatly.

"It 's Vincent with the bad shoes," Durbin was saying.

" 'Cause I heard Porter say so, and he sleeps in the bunk just above him."

"All right," called "Shrimp." "I 'll get the scissors, but be careful." In a second he returned and handed them to Durbin. They all moved toward Harold, then Durbin reached and grabbed him from behind.

"Now, Vincent, old boy, we 've got you, and we 're going to mark you so we 'll know after this who you are." Harold struggled to free himself, but to no avail.

"I 'm not Vincent, I 'm Harold," he cried. "You fellows are crazy."

"O, yes, you rascal, you 've stuffed us long enough, and you can't fool us now. Vincent you are, and Vincent you 're going to be hereafter," declared Durbin, whereupon he began to cut big chunks from the back of Harold's yellow hair; not enough to do any harm, but enough to be plainly seen.

Vincent missed the performance, for he had gone to the pump for a drink, and returned just in time to see the job completed.

"And-a you can't fool us any more," laughed Bill. "Vincent is the one with the hair cut, and Harold is the one without it cut," and he laughed at their clever method of branding the Twins.

Harold gave Vincent a sly little wink, and just as soon as the Twins could get a

word together, they arranged for a secret meeting.

The camp made the very most of its newly-acquired information by finding every occasion to call the Botting with the trimmed hair Vincent, just to prove they knew which was which at last.

When mess was called that evening, the Twins made their appearance together; a broad grin was on their faces, their arms were interlocked, and they were keeping step. Instead of falling into line, as was the custom, they slowly marched down the entire length of the line-up, a little to one side, then back to their places, without so much as a word. They evidently were on dress parade. What was the consternation of the crowd when they saw what had been done. The untrimmed Botting had become trimmed, and so cleverly was the job done that it was again impossible to tell which was which. Instinctively all eyes fell to the shoes, but the Twins were too smart for them, for each boy wore one good and one bad shoe. The deception was complete.

At last, not knowing what to say, but wishing to be equal to the occasion, Durbin stepped from line and proposed three "dummy rahs" for the Twins. Every camper doubled up his fists and with awful faces went through the motions of three rousing cheers without as much as uttering a sound. The result was all that could be desired. Everybody laughed, and again the Twins were acknowledged the winners.

It was too wet outside for the usual evening camp-fire, so the evening was spent around the open grate discussing plans for the greatest day in Camp Eberhart—July Fourth.

"It 's only a little over a week off," the "chief" was saying, "and we want to have the very best day ever. You know we have a beautiful new American flag that was presented to us on Christmas, and I just want to propose to you that we have a new flagpole to fly it from."

"That 's the eye."

"You bet, we want a high one."

"I want to suggest further, fellows,"

continued the "chief," "that we get up early on the Fourth, dig our hole, and raise our new flag-pole before breakfast. We are planning to have Mr. Eldred with us for our Independence address, and we 'll have it before breakfast, in the cool of the morning, just as soon as the new pole is up and the flag flying."

"Great!" shouted the crowd.

"Where do you think the flagstaff ought to stand?" questioned the "chief."

"On the point beyond the locker house," said Durbin.

"That 's the place," shouted half a dozen others. So it was decided, and Mr. George was authorized to secure and bring in the desired pole.

"O, Mr. Blaine! tell us what the athletic events for that day will be," called Mr. Verne.

"Well," replied Mr. Blaine, "first of all we want to build a dozen good water pyramids. We want to get busy on them very soon. Then we will have swimming races for time and form, plain and fancy diving, all kinds of races in boats, tubs, and in

the water. Then, of course, we will want to give our visitors an exhibition on the chute-the-chutes. The final stunt will be a series of tilting matches in the boats. That will take all the afternoon. We will, of course, have our baseball game in the morning, and with your minstrel show and the display of fireworks in the evening, I think we 'll all be ready for bed by night."

The program as outlined created no little interest, and furnished something definite to think, talk, and speculate about for the next week.

"What day will we have our hike this week?" asked Vincent. For if there was any one thing that he loved more than another in the camp-life, it was rambling in the woods a half day, then building a fire and cooking a real camp dinner.

"If it is a nice day we will go on Thursday. We 'll go to the same place we planned to go to to-day, and we 'll dig up that Indian grave.

"Hurrah!" shouted the crowd.

"Say, do you really believe that 's an

Indian mound?" questioned "Shrimp." "I think it 's a fake."

"Fake nothing," sharply answered Vincent. "This country 's full of Indian mounds. There 's dozens of them. Why, only last spring a fellow over at Long Lake, and that 's only two miles away, plowed up a mound and found thirteen skeletons, arrow-heads, stone axes, and all kinds of things."

"Is that so?" said a dozen in the same breath, and in another moment the conversation had changed from July Fourth to Indian mounds. Many were the strange tales told around the fire that evening.

"What did he do with the skeletons?" asked "Love," between chattering teeth.

"O, that was a funny thing," replied Vincent. "The thirteenth one that he plowed up had an arrow still sticking through the ribs, just where the heart had been, and the old fellow dreamed it was bad luck, so he buried them all again."

"Mr. George says that he has heard there is lots of buried Indian stuff around

here, though," said Harold. "The place we are going to dig is supposed to be an old battlefield."

"What battle?" eagerly inquired "Love."

"O well, I can't tell just which one," went on Harold, "but it was one the Pottawatomies had with the Iroquois. You see the Pottawatomie braves went out on a big hunt, and while they were gone the Iroquois, who were the greatest enemies of the Indians in these parts, slipped into the Pottawatomie camp and stole all the women and children. They hurried back toward the Canada line with them, so as not to be bothered with them when the big fight came. You see they were planning to get back to the Pottawatomie camp before the braves returned from the hunt. But there was one little girl they did n't get, because she was out gathering wild rice in the swamp. When she heard the war-cry she hurried home, but at the edge of the cat-tails she saw the Iroquois tying and gagging all the women of her tribe, so she slipped back into the cat-tails.

The Iroquois had only been gone a few hours when the Pottawatomie braves returned unexpectedly. The girl explained what had happened. The braves hurried to their canoes and paddled up the St. Joe to Elkhart, then north on the trail to head off the flying Iroquois and to rescue their women. They reached this lake first, and, ambushing themselves, waited for their enemy. A terrific battle followed, in which the Iroquois were nearly all killed. Those that escaped were followed up by fast runners, and killed, one at a time. Now, somewhere around Harwood Lake is where all those Iroquois are buried, and we want to find them."

"Vincent, tell us that story about that old crazy Indian trader you said you read in a State History over at Mr. George's the other day," called Durbin. "Did n't it have something to do with Corey Lake?"

"Do you suppose it could possibly be the same old hermit that Mr. George told us about at the camp-fire the other evening, Chief?" asked Porter.

"To tell you the truth, fellows, I

have n't had time to read that article yet myself, but I propose to do it very soon, and then talk with Mr. George about it. I 've heard a number of interesting stories about that old man, and I want to know more."

"Let 's read it now," urged Cooper, who had become much interested in the article from what Vincent had been telling them as they sat by the fire.

"That 's a go," called half a dozen others who had heard the matter discussed the day before. "Let 's read it out loud now."

"You bet, we need a good story to sleep on," declared Harold.

The chief liked the suggestion, so went to his office to procure the big leather volume.

Soon the place was found, and all drew in close to hear the better.

Sau-au-quett Sells Corey Lake Region to Uncle Sam

"It was the day of the 'big payment,' and Sau-au-quett had made a very hurried trip up from the village of St. Joe to see

to it that his crafty schemes were carried out as he had planned them.

"'I have sold this land! And I would sell it again for two gallons of whisky!' cried he as he rode into the midst of the Indian council. When well into the great circle of squatting figures he reined in his horse, and with a long sweep of his arm he unsheathed the ugly saber that hung at his side, waving it threateningly in the air. Then he sat staring coldly at the stolid faces about him, as if to determine whether any one would dare to oppose him in his deal. The violent throbs of his own heart were keeping time with those of his excited pony.

"He was not the thoroughbred Pottawatomie that he would have you believe him to be, for his father had been no other than that famous Pierre Morreau, the Frenchman, who many years before, by cunning strategy and by taking advantage of the superstitions of the red men, had succeeded in getting a large part of the tribe to renounce Cush-ee-wee, their hereditary sachem, and to install him as

Big Chief of the Nottawas. He soon married an Indian maiden, and for many years ruled his tribe wisely and well. When Sau-au-quett, his oldest son, came into man's estate he took over the leadership of the people.

"Sau-au-quett was a striking figure as he sat on his nervous pinto pony with an ease and grace learned only from years of constant riding. Hatred and vengeance were stamped on his handsome face. A cunning and crafty twinkle was in his eye. He had dressed especially for this occasion; a blue military coat two sizes large, its polished brass buttons glistening in the sunlight; an immense chapeau with a tall, white plume fastened to the side, the sheath of his cavalry saber hung carelessly at his hip, and a pair of immense pistols in his belt.

"The general cession of Indian lands had been made at Chicago in 1821, but there had been many special reservations made to the Indians at that time, one of the most notable of which was the Nottawa-seepe Prairie, a rich, fertile section

of Southern Michigan, embracing the beautiful lake districts of St. Joseph County. Following the Black Hawk War, the Government had negotiated with the Pottawatomies for the cession of the Nottawa-seepe Reservation, along with other important Indian lands in Indiana and Illinois. But it was not until the death of the real chieftain, Cush-ee-wee, in 1883, that the Government was able to get such a treaty signed by the Indians, and then only by buying off the conquering Sau-au-quett and his band of supporters.

"The treaty plainly stated that the Indians were to have possession of the reservation undisturbed for two years following the signing. At the end of this time they were to receive the first 'big payment' of ten thousand dollars' worth of calico, beads, and trinkets, and be removed to ample hunting grounds west of the Mississippi River.

"The day of the 'big payment' came, but meanwhile the other faction of the tribe, influenced by the powerful Sac chieftain, Menomonee, had concluded that the

treaty was not binding because Sau-au-quett and his followers had had no lawful right to sell the land without the consent of the whole tribe.

"For more than a week the Indians had been coming from every direction, pitching their wigwams along the St. Joe River and spending much time in admiring the gaudy finery, blankets, saddles, bridles, and antiquated guns which were displayed by the Government agents as a part of the 'big payment.' For days the council had met and parleyed from sunrise to sunset, but without success. The Indians were becoming each day more interested in the barter of their choice furs and blankets for the cheap whisky that unprincipled white men were ready and willing to trade them.

"Council after council had been held. Feast after feast had been indulged in. The Indian agents, Patrick Maranette and Pierre Navarre, had argued, debated, and even pleaded with the red men that they keep their word to the Government as indicated in the treaty. But to no avail.

The more whisky they were able to secure, the more determined became the opposition, except among Sau-au-quett's followers.

"In the heat of the discussion, and on the morning set for the delivery of the 'big payment,' came Sau-au-quett in all his splendor. He rode pell-mell into the midst of the council, unsheathing his long saber and shouting as he did so:

" 'I have sold this land! And I would sell it again for two gallons of whisky!'

"A French interpreter, whom Chief Menomonee had persuaded to aid him at the council, seeing the great influence that Sau-au-quett was sure to have upon the undecided portion of the tribe, stepped boldly forth and addressed the would-be chieftain thus:

" 'You miserable half-breed, eldest son of my despised brother, who forsook his home and married a squaw—'

"He got no further, for Sau-au-quett had struck him down with the long saber, nearly dismembering his extended arm.

No doubt Sau-au-quett would have killed the Frenchman, had it not been for the quick action of Quau-sett—the Duck Wing, brother to the hereditary sachem. Quick as lightning he snatched one of the heavy pistols from Sau-au-quett's belt and fired full at him. But the ancient weapon missed fire, and in another instant Sau-au-quett turned and struck Quau-sett a terrific blow just above the shoulder, doubtless aiming to sever his head. The cruel saber pierced the heavy blanket, but was turned aside from its deadly course by a huge plug of tobacco concealed in Quau-sett's blanket. Sau-au-quett was disarmed from behind, and Quau-sett was hurried away to a place of safety.

"The council was once more resumed. For the last time the opposing forces stated their cause. The mighty chieftain stood, his arms extended, there in one of the grandest woodland theaters on the earth—one that had been fashioned, finished, and furnished by the hands of the Great Spirit Himself for His children—

and pleaded for his people. A great silence fell on the assembled Indians as he began to speak.

"'Members of this Council: The great White Chief does not know the truth. He, like me, has been fooled. He does not know that his messengers have made my young chiefs drunk, obtained their consent, and pretended to have mine, to give up our country. He does not know that I refused and still refuse to sell these lands. He would not by force drive me and my people from my home and from the graves of my tribe and of my children who have gone to the Great Spirit, nor allow you to tell me that your braves will take me away tied like a wolf, if he knew the truth. My brothers, your White Chief is just, but he listens to the voices of young chiefs, and they have lied. I have not sold these lands. I will not sell them. I have not signed a treaty, and I will not sign one. I am not going away to the land beyond the Great River, and I do n't want to hear anything more about it.'

"Slowly he sat down, and Sau-au-quett

took his place before the council. In words of fire he described the promised hunting ground beyond the Great River and told marvelous stories of the wealth of the 'Great White Chief' and of the riches he would bestow upon them, declaring that the ten thousand dollars' worth of goods then on display by the agents was but a sample of what was to follow. He closed his heated argument with a promise that every brave who that day stood by the treaty should have not only his share of the goods and a boundless new home, but should also have his fill of the 'fire-water' that was even then on board the two great barges lying at anchor on the river. His words were so convincing that soon the great piles of guns and hatchets, blankets, calico, knives, tobacco, pipes, beads, and copper trinkets were being distributed under the supervision of Maranett and Navarre, assisted by Governor Porter himself.

"At the first signs of an agreement by the council the great barges were drawn in close to shore, and under the direction

of one named Hesikia Thomson literally scores of barrels of whisky and rum were landed.

"Soon very lively trading was in progress; the whites cheating the Indians out of great quantities of their goods from the 'big payment,' giving them in return the cheapest of whisky. Quau-sett presented Sau-au-quett with a fine, large demijohn of rye. Accordingly their peace was declared and promptly celebrated by a spree. Quau-sett, who had had some previous dealings with the man Thomson, now became his Indian agent, aiding him, even in his half-drunken condition, to cheat every Indian out of as much as possible of his share of the goods. The Government had given strict orders that no 'fire-water' should be allowed on the grounds the day of the settlement. Accordingly Mr. Maranett and Pierre Navarre gathered what help they could, and swooped down on the kegs of 'fire-water,' ordering the owners to cease its sale immediately 'by order of the United States Government.' The traders refused to obey the orders, where-

upon the agents attacked the kegs with axes, succeeding in knocking in the heads of most of them. The whisky was pouring out in streams upon the river bank. The Indians were so wild for it that they lay upon their stomachs and lapped it up from the dirt, much to the disgust of the agents.

"Hesikia Thomson, however, while he had lost a large share of his whisky, had already secured the more valuable part of the payment goods, and had removed them to the river barges. Then with Quau-sett, his squaw, and several other Indians, he drifted down the river and was gone before the agents or the governor could get to his arrest and disposal.

"Although Sau-au-quett and Quau-sett had declared peace, Sau-au-quett's favorite squaw, who had been an eye-witness to the whole day's proceedings, swore vengeance on Quau-sett, and at once set about to lay her plans. Quau-sett and his squaw accompanied Thomson as far as Corey Lake, and there withdrew into the wilderness. Here Thomson, who had a

few months before married the daughter of a very queer old settler, homesteaded a farm on a beautiful piece of heavily timbered land, clearing just enough of it for a small garden, orchard, and room for a small log house. Quau-sett became interpreter for Thomson, and soon a trading post was opened for the Indians. For, although the treaty had been agreed upon and signed, after the entire first payment was received by the Indians they swung back to the old chief and refused to leave the land. It was seven years later when they were forcibly removed by United States soldiers, but not before many an old score on settler and Indian had been settled.

"Two years after the 'big payment' Sau-au-quett's squaw, under a pretext of friendship, visited Quau-sett at the Thomson place on Corey Lake. Her intention was to kill Duck Wing for his attempt on her husband's life, but as no occasion presented itself she took vengeance by stabbing Quau-sett's squaw to death with a sheath-knife she had secured at the 'big

payment.' She then went stealthily back to her home near Coldwater and presented her husband with the bloody knife, telling him of her deed. Sau-au-quett was greatly pleased, and carried the knife until the time of his death, always declaring it was his sure luck against 'white man's evil.'

"But in 1839 Sau-au-quett himself was murdered in Coldwater, supposedly by one of his own tribe who had opposed the sale of the Nottawa-seepe lands from the very beginning. The old chief was sleeping in his wigwam when the enemy crept stealthily in to his bedside, drew from Sau-au-quett's girdle his famous sheath-knife, and drove it up to the handle into the old half-breed's bosom. The chief sprang to his feet, gave one whoop, and fell dead. In some mysterious manner Thomson, 'the crazy paleface of the lakes,' as he was afterward known among the Indians, secured Sau-au-quett's famous knife and guns. Tradition even whispered that Thomson had hired the murderer of Sau-au-quett in order to get possession of a certain packet of papers that that

Indian was taking from Coldwater to the governor of the Northwest Territory. At least the papers were never again heard of after the mysterious murder. Tradition also whispered that the murderer was none other than Quau-sett himself. This supposition was afterward made more substantial by the fact that Quau-sett, the Duck Wing, soon after disappeared from the Thomson neighborhood, and was never heard of again. At about the same time Hesikia's wife left him and returned to her father, then living in the village of Mendon. The same winter Thomson was found wandering in the dense woods hopelessly insane, and remained so until his tragic death by freezing, several years later."

"I 'll bet it 's the same fellow," said Cooper. "Would n't it be funny if he was?"

The chief closed the book with a slam and turned thoughtfully away. "I would n't be surprised," he said, "but we 'll probably never know."

"O they would enjoy this hike as much as any of us."

CHAPTER X

DIGGING UP INDIAN MOUNDS

"I WONDER what the Iroquois would think if they could see this bunch hiking along through the woods," chuckled Harold, who was helping carry a bushel basket piled high with things for the dinner.

"O, they would enjoy this hike as much as we will," replied Dale, as he put down his end of the basket. "Only, of course, they would know a lot more about cooking over an open fire than any of us."

"Well, I guess so," replied Harold. "Why, any Indian could cook a loaf of bread on a green paddle just by holding the dough in the hot ashes. But there are n't twenty-five fellows in this bunch that have ever cooked a real camp meal, let alone make bread. I 'll bet we 'll have a circus watching some of them at noon, for you know the 'chief' and the leaders

are n't even going to make any suggestions, and the fellow that gets the best meal, all things considered, is going to get a prize."

"Gee, I 'd like to win it," confided Harold to Vincent. "I wish he 'd let two of us work together, do n't you?"

"Longley 's a peach at cooking on the fire," suggested Vincent. "He belongs to a club of fellows that cook their supper out once a week. He said they had made oyster-stew and cornbread and baked eggs and—"

"O, rats! I 'll get enough to eat, anyway," said Dale, and the subject was dismissed as the basket was again moved forward.

The long line of fellows made a small army as they trudged along the lake road, in and out among the great oaks, stopping now and then to pick a handful of berries or to change the load to some of the other fellows.

After an hour's steady walking they turned in through an ancient gate, left the lake behind, and worked their way into

an immense open meadow with low, heavily-wooded hills surrounding it. When well into the meadow, the baskets were put down and the entire party lined up for dinner instructions.

"You are each to cook a fresh egg, a piece of meat, and two potatoes," instructed the "chief." "Each boy is to select his own wood and bring it to a place that will be assigned him, build a fire that is his idea of a camp cooking fire, and cook each article any way he chooses. The contest will not depend on how well you cook any one thing, but upon the best average meal. The leaders will prepare a special fire and make coffee for all, and when the dinners are cooked, the sandwiches will be issued."

There was a wild scramble for wood, suitable flat stones, the proper clay, and such other things as would be needed. Dale had the good fortune to find two excellent tin-cans and promptly handed one over to Vincent. Wood of every size and of every description was carried to the allotted spots. Some carried in stones, with

which to build fireplaces—just for what use, they did n't know. Others dug holes in the ground and built their fires in them. Some refused to burn anything but choice sassafras, while others were perfectly content with dead, half-rotten, water-soaked wood, dry brush, or chips.

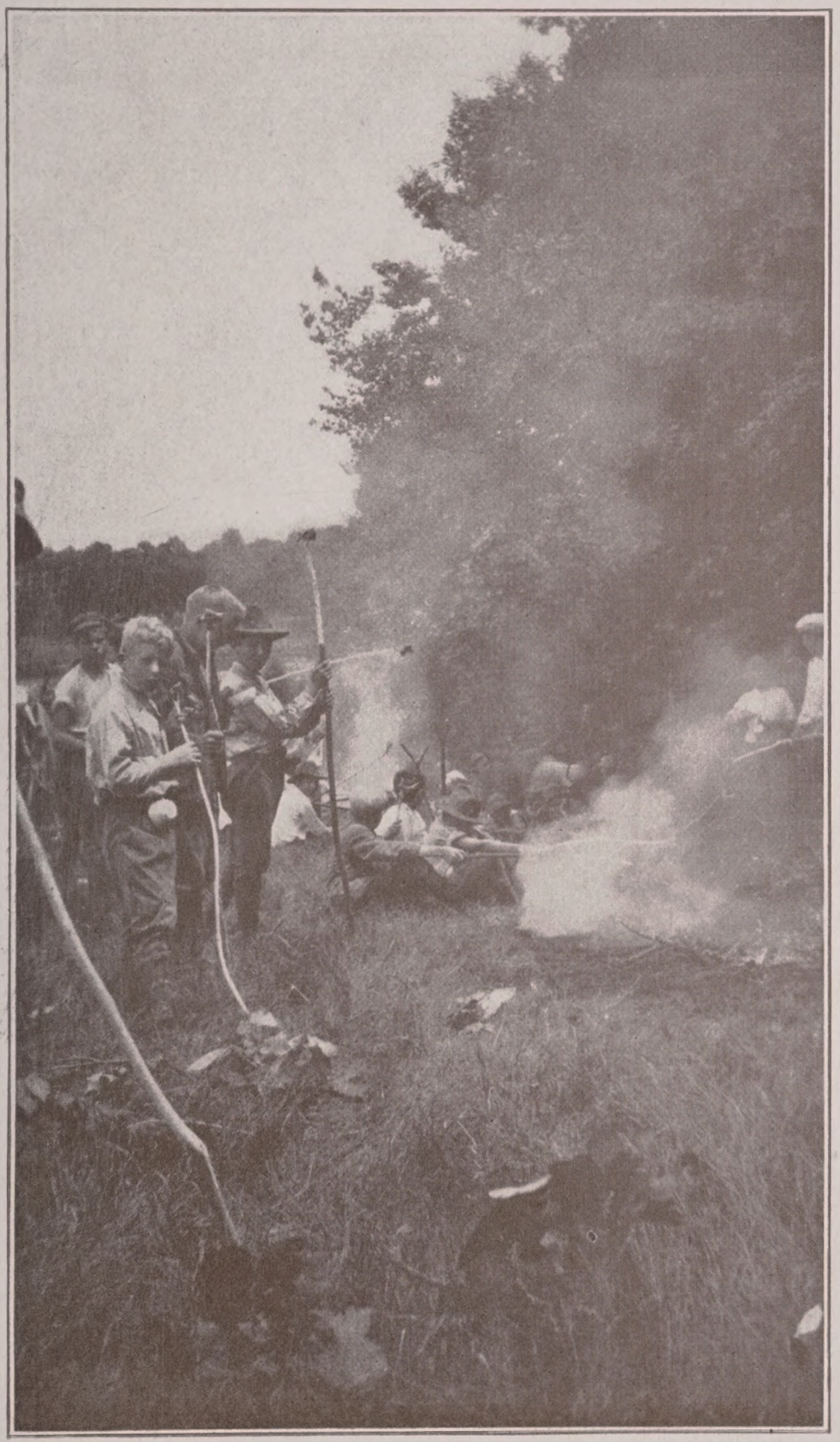
After an hour of planning and preparing, several boys lighted their fires, or rather attempted to, with the two matches allowed them. Dale was one of the first to get a rousing blaze—one big enough to cook dinner over for a whole regiment—but it was his first attempt, and how was he to know? He determined to cook his egg first. By that time the other fellows would be started on their meat, and he would learn by watching them, just how to do it. He had seen his aunt boil eggs many a time, and he had a nice, clean can to boil his in now. It would be a simple matter, for while the others were improvising ways of cooking their eggs, his would be boiling away with no trouble at all.

A pail of fresh water had been brought

from the spring in the swamp. He filled his can, dropped his egg into it, and after scorching both eyebrows, burning his right hand, and nearly setting his clothes on fire, he succeeded in placing the can very insecurely in the blaze. He had purposely chosen a place near the Twins, so he could watch them, for he was anxious to learn.

Vincent and Harold busied themselves in silence, each carefully observing what the other did. Both their fires were very small and very carefully arranged. At one side of each blaze lay a neat little pile of carefully selected sticks as a reserve. Harold had secured a lump of good clay, and after working it smooth and picking all the little stones and sticks from it, he removed the ends from his potatoes, then covered them with a good coat of the clay, taking care to leave a tiny hole over the cut ends in order to allow the steam to escape. This would keep the potatoes from exploding. He then deftly raked away his ashes and placed the potatoes in the bottom of the fire, covering them with

selected hickory sticks. Next he cleaned his flat stone by rubbing its surface well with gravel. When its condition suited him he placed it in the fire to warm, turning it now and then to distribute the heat so that it would not crack. When it was warmed through he propped it up on three other stones as legs, and fed his choicest sticks into the fire to heat it. Dale watched with unconcealed admiration, entirely forgetting his own fire. As he stood watching the Twins, suddenly there was a sputtering, a spitting, and a column of smoky steam behind him. He turned to see the water running out of the bottom of the now blackened can, for the solder had melted and released bottom, egg, and water into the fire. The egg probably would have been burned to a crisp, had it not been for the prompt action of Vincent, who, picking up a handful of green leaves, snatched the egg from the fire and deftly handed it to the astonished Dale, who instantly dropped it, and thereby ruined it. Vincent was disgusted beyond measure, but said nothing.



The air was blue with smoke.

He had already dropped into his fire a number of carefully selected stones and was turning them over and over with a pair of tongs he had made by bending together a green hickory limb. Longley had long since had his meat frying on a flat stone, and was keeping the hot ashes over his clay-encrusted potatoes.

The air was blue with smoke, and fellows were coughing and sneezing all along the line, not knowing enough to stay on the smokeless side of their fires.

Bill Ruthford was doing nicely. He had built an excellent fire, his flat stone was getting hot, and he was ready to attempt to fry his egg on it.

Vincent had cleaned his tin-can and placed the necessary water in it and the egg. He then fished his hot stones from the fire with his tongs, and dropped them carefully, one at a time, into the can. In a short time the water was boiling. He thus cooked the egg without placing can or egg near the fire. His meat, which he had chosen to broil on the end of a forked stick rather than on a flat stone, was al-

ready turning to a beautiful brown. He was about ready to pull out his potatoes, which he had encrusted with clay and placed in the hot ashes, but after testing one with a sharp stick he decided to wait, as it was a little hard yet.

Harold had wrapped his egg in many thicknesses of hickory leaves, tying them on with long strips of hickory bark. He then wet the little bundle thoroughly, and placed it in the ashes to steam.

"And-a my egg slipped right off into the fire," complained Bill to Mr. Cooper, who immediately gave him another and told him to try again.

Longley, who had profited by Bill's mistake, did not release all of the egg on to the flat stone at once, but let out only a tiny bit from the broken shell until it had fried and made something for the rest to gather about.

"Shrimp" Warren had had bad luck with his stones, for by some queer freak of nature they had, when they became hot, suddenly exploded, scattering his

dinner over a space of twenty feet, much to his disgust.

Needless to say, there were some boys who could not eat the food they had cooked, so were delighted when their turn came in the sandwich line and at the coffee pot.

The leaders helped here and examined there, and after due consideration they decided that, though Longley and the Twins had each one employed different methods of cooking, they had all done exceedingly well and should be considered as equal winners.

There was not a boy present but that wished to try the thing over on their next hike, so that they could practice the things they had learned.

"That 's the best dinner I 've had since I 've been in camp," declared Harold, and Vincent promptly seconded the motion.

After dinner they began the digging of the mysterious Indian mound. After a great deal of speculation it was decided to dig two trenches, intersecting at right

angles, through the mounds. There were many willing hands at the start, and in a short time an opening was under way. Those who did not care to dig sat by and offered many suggestions.

"No use being careful till we are down three feet at least," explained Vincent between shovelfuls.

"O, three feet nothing," ejaculated Leonard. "Four feet is the regulation depth of Indian graves.

When one trench was three feet deep, and the color of the dirt suddenly changed from brown to white, the interest became intense.

"They always bury them in white sand," affirmed Durbin. "And when they did n't naturally strike it, they made rush-mats and carried it sometimes from long distances."

"Gee, I 'd like to strike a skull," said Harold, pausing to wipe away the perspiration.

"Old Thomson had one on each end of his mantel over in the old cabin," stated

"Shrimp." "Mr. George told a fellow that told me. And he used one of them to keep his money in, because he knew the Indians would n't dare touch it there, they were too superstitious."

"That Thomson was a funny old duffer, was n't he?" remarked Dale, from his perch on the pile of dirt, anxious to get a good story going.

While Vincent worked in one end of the trench, Harold worked in the other, and every few minutes those digging would change off with those on the bank, so that all had a turn at it. Not so with the Twins, for they refused to give up their shovels even for an instant. Harold had his haversack slung on his shoulder, and, although it kept slipping around in his way, for some reason he refused to put it aside.

"Why do n't you take that bag off while you dig?" suggested Durbin.

"'Cause. Think I want my cup and dishes to get lost?" blandly replied Harold.

One by one the boys tired themselves out and withdrew to the shade to rest. Still the Twins kept digging.

"I feel it in my bones," remarked Harold, "that this is my lucky day. I 'm surely going to strike an Indian."

By three o'clock the hole was four feet deep in places, and still no signs of Indians, when Vincent declared he smelled a strange odor "like a mummy smells;" but not being able to describe it any better than that, the others declared it was only his imagination.

By three-thirty there were but five fellows left in the trench, when Harold, who was digging at the further end of the hole, began to whistle softly as he worked. A keen observer would have noticed that Vincent promptly turned at the first whistled notes and winked slyly at his brother in the other end of the trench. Then, in as excited a tone as he could command, he suddenly called out:

"A bone! a bone! I 've found a bone!" There was a wild race from every direction, and a bending eagerly over the hole

to see the discovery. In another second the overcrowded bank had caved in and the discovered bone was lost under feet of dirt. The excitement knew no bounds, however, and every boy wanted a shovel.

Those that were fortunate enough to get hold of one worked like Turks. Meanwhile, while the rush and excitement was at its height at the other end of the trench, Harold quickly slipped the bag around and drew out several pieces of bone the cook had boiled white and clean for him. These he quickly buried under a few inches of dirt, then joined the excited crowd at the other end of the trench.

"Here, one of you fellows spell me off. I 'm tired," he called, as he climbed out of the hole. Dale promptly took the shovel and began where Harold had left off. Harold watched him closely for a few seconds, then started for a drink. Dale lifted one, two—six shovels of earth, then his shovel struck something hard.

"A bone! a bone!" he shouted, and the crowd surged to his end of the trench. The next shovelful showed there in the

white sand several pieces of bone as white and clean as the sand itself.

Proudly Dale lifted them, a piece at a time, and handed them to the eager boys on the bank. "Love" was among those fortunate enough to receive a specimen. It was a thin, flat bone, with the appearance of having been removed from a larger bone with a meat saw, which fact was overlooked in the excitement.

"What part of the body is it from?" eagerly inquired "Love," turning it over and examining it carefully from every side.

"It 's a piece of a skull, is n't it?" suggested "Shrimp."

"No, it 's a femur, or something like that," added "Specks."

"Ask Bill," suggested Vincent. "His father 's a doctor; he 'll know."

Bill examined it critically. "And-a it 's a knee-cap, I think," said he. The next shovelful brought up half a dozen bones from last Sunday's chicken dinner, but each one, after considerable controversy, was named and identified. One was a

collar-bone, another a vertebra, and a third a floating rib.

"Gee, is n't this great!" chuckled Vincent, with glee. "Now, fellows, let 's get busy and get the rest of him." While the Twins stood out on the bank and watched, the rest dug untiringly till the hole was too deep to any longer throw the dirt out. But they found no other traces, and at last gave up from sheer exhaustion.

"I suppose the rest of him just turned to dirt, did n't it?" said Harold to Vincent. Every specimen was carefully carried home and proudly displayed to the cook.

"O, dem is jest chicken bones," laughed the good-natured chef. "Some wise ole fox buried dem bones in dat hole so de farmers would n't cotch him foolin' roun' dere hen houses." But the boys were not willing to believe him.

That evening Vincent sat a long time silent by the fire, till his dream was broken by a good-natured slap on the shoulder from Cooper.

"What are you thinking about, boy?"

"O, I was just wondering why we

did n't find any arrow-heads or stone axes in that hole if it was a real Indian grave. Seems queer, do n't it? Anyway, it 's kind of mean to be digging up Indian graves, do n't you think so? If there are any spirits about, they are liable to make us sorry."

"There are those that say there are spirits around here," suggested Cooper. "You know a long time ago a woman jumped from a boat into Little Corey and was drowned. The old folks around here believed she had seen old Thomson's ghost. She was just a little insane at times, and declared she had often met his spirit wandering in the woods."

"Spirits and bones," shivered Vincent. "I 'll bet I 'll dream about them to-night. Good-night!" and he rose and went to his bunk.

CHAPTER XI

A GHOST IN THE NIGHT

MR. BLAINE blew a long blast on his whistle and motioned the swimmers to come out of the water.

"You fellows are the limit to-day," he said. "You have been grouchy and listless all the afternoon, and some of you are too cranky to live. You must have worked too hard yesterday on that Indian mound. But I 'll tell you one thing: you 'll never have these pyramids in shape for the Fourth of July unless you get busy. Now let 's have a little 'pep.' Watch for your signals! Line up!"

The fellows took their time to it and were listless. Mr. Blaine gave the order, but "Shrimp" and Dale misunderstood him and took a wrong position. He called them back into line and tried again, with characteristic patience, but to no avail.

"No use, fellows. Let 's quit. All out!" He turned and walked off the pier. There was a chatter of complaining voices as the boys reluctantly came out on the beach and moved toward the locker house. Mr. Blaine turned to Cooper and the "chief."

"I never saw the fellows in that spirit before. They are sore at each other, and at me, and at everything. They need a good night's sleep. You know they would n't be quiet last night after the fracas. Those Twins are sure 'foxy' kids, are n't they?"

"Yes, but they were foolish to tell about the bones. They might have known the fellows would get even with them some way," replied the "chief."

"Well, I was sure there was something in the wind when we turned in last night," added Cooper. "I noticed that several fellows in my tent did n't put on their pajamas. I asked them about it, and they said it was too hot. I did n't think much about it at the time."

"Well, they certainly did duck them

good and proper, anyway," went on the "chief," "and they deserved it, too, only I don't like this sour spirit we have had all day. We'll have to get rid of it at the camp fire to-night somehow."

At supper time there was a friendly rough house, and three fellows were late. They were refused supper and, of course, went off very much disgruntled.

The usual singing and yells were omitted that night at the fire, and the devotions were very brief. Then the "chief" made a suggestion.

"Fellows, we don't ever want another day in camp like this one, do we?" There was a chorus of "Nos." "Well, then, I have a suggestion to make. In order that we may never again experience a day when there will be so much grouching and quarreling, let us destroy every bit of hard feeling and start over again. We are all ashamed of ourselves. Mr. Blaine has suggested that we construct to-morrow a life-sized dummy, dress him in camp attire, and call him Professor Grouch. In the evening we will begin our stunts by

court-martialing the Grouch, and if we find him guilty of being the true cause of the crabbing and unrest in this camp to-day, we will burn him at the stake and celebrate his death with feasting. But if we find him innocent, we will seek further for the real culprit. Are you in favor?"

The first enthusiasm of the day was shown in the shouts of approval.

"Down with Grouch!" cried Vincent.

"Mob him! Mob him!" cried Harold, brandishing a stick wildly in the air.

"Listen!" The "chief" raised his hands for silence. "There are two large piles of old logs down by the shore. In the morning we want to get out early, while it 's cool, and build an immense fire with them for the destruction of Grouch if he be guilty. Every fellow that will be on hand to help, stand up." The entire company stood up. "Now, further, fellows: To every man that puts in two good hours on that fire in the morning, we will give him credit for a 'piece of camp service.' That will enable some of you to get your Rags to-morrow night."

"That means my Brown Rag," joyously shouted Dale. "Gee, I thought I 'd never get it, but now I can. Hurray! Down with Grouch!"

"Now let 's start in pursuit of the enemy of to-day's fun and good spirits by a real live 'Eberhart' before we go to bed." There was never such cheering, before or since, as followed.

A judge and jury, as well as lawyers, were chosen to try the Grouch at the stunt fire the next evening, and to determine what should be done with him. Then the crowd broke up and went to their tents, all but Bill and the Twins, who had obtained permission to hunt bullfrogs that night under the direction of Mr. Cooper.

They had concealed their boat in the tall rushes on the shore, and now they slipped noiselessly to it. The necessary bag and solar lamp were already in the bow, and all was in readiness. They got in and paddled quietly past the camp—out far enough from shore so they could not be seen. They saw the fellows prepar-

ing for the evening dip and could hear their merry voices.

"What are those Three Rivers kids up to now?" came floating out over the water to them. Vincent chuckled as he listened.

"They are nowhere to be found just now," came another voice.

"O, they are n't far away, you can be sure of that," came in a friendly voice from the locker house. "But keep your eyes peeled for a bucket of water or a snake or some fool stunt."

Harold laughed. "Wish I could scare them to death," he said in a whisper. "They are getting on to us."

Soon the boat slipped through the channel and into the swamp-shored Little Corey. The lamp was lighted, and Bill took his place on the bow of the boat. Cooper rowed, and the Twins balanced up the stern, taking charge of the large burlap bag that had been brought along to hold the captured monsters. From far down the lake came the hoarse croak of one big fellow. It was instantly answered from across the swamp by a second.

Then one very close at hand gave a long, dismal croak, then another, and another, till the summer night reverberated with hoarse croakings.

When the hunters reached the swamp, Cooper rested on his oars and listened. The young cat-tails waved gently in the warm breeze, and here and there a large pond-lily pad spread an inviting seat for the frogs. Bill sat on the bow alert, his lamp flashing long, narrow streaks of light among the lilies and the cat-tails.

Suddenly there came a hoarse croak, so near that it startled them all. Bill swung his lamp quickly in the direction of the sound, but for some reason could not locate the fellow, so perfectly did his green back blend with the surrounding color. At last, in disgust, Bill cried out, "And-a do you see him?" The big green fellow who was sitting blinking blindly at the light became frightened and, dropping off his perch, disappeared with a gurgle.

The Twins sighed, Cooper chuckled, but Bill only adjusted himself for the next surprise. Then, as if by common consent,

the frogs began croaking on every side, but when pursued would become quiet again, and so were safe in the shadows of the tall grass and of the cat-tails.

It was with no little effort that the heavy boat was forced from place to place in the shallow water, in and out, back and forth, among the close matted rushes, and it began to look very much as if the frog hunt would be a failure, when Bill suddenly spied a big, green fellow sitting on a clump of bent reeds, his white throat puffed out ready for a croak. He flashed the light full upon him. The frog only gave a strange guttural note of surprise, then sat and stared. Slowly the boat crept nearer. Bill extended his arm as far as he could toward the frog, and the Twins strained to get a better view. Cooper gave his directions in low undertones, and Bill did as he was told. At last the boat stopped a yard from the big, green fellow, his glassy eyes gleaming in the light. Bill made a quick grab, there was a smothered croak, a violent kicking, and the frog was held tightly in Bill's extended hand.

The Twins chattered delightedly, for they had never before seen such a frog. There in the half light and in the excitement of the moment he looked twice his real size. Bill, with a pleased smile on his face, held the frog triumphantly before the light.

"And-a what shall we call him?" he asked, dryly. No one had time to answer, for just then all frogdom seemed to croak inquiringly, in answer to the sounds coming from the burlap bag.

"This is a regular kidnaping stunt, is n't it?" began Vincent, but he was promptly silenced by a violent nudge from Harold, for already Bill had spotted a second frog and was motioning Cooper to go forward. A second capture was effected, and a third. Then Harold took Bill's place and proved himself also an expert.

On around the swamp they went, catching them at nearly regular intervals now, until they had seven. Seven great bullfrogs, all in one bag, croaking and gurgling their displeasure at being captured. It had been, in days gone by, that a bull-

frog was absolutely safe on Corey Lake after dark. But now some great giant, with an eye that flashed long streaks of dazzling light here and there at his will, had come, and pandemonium reigned in frogdom.

Bill found it difficult to stay in the boat, so eager was he to lay hold on the monsters. Harold, by a slight miscalculation, missed one. So Vincent promptly declared it was time for him to try his hand at the game.

Great swarms of insects were coming to the light, and they fell in countless numbers around the hot lamp. Now and then a perch or blue-gill would rise to the surface to feast on the easy prey and to look at the strange light. The boat had slipped clear around to the far side of the lake before they realized it, and in another half-hour they were in the very middle of the swamp. They had forgotten time, place, and everything except frogs. Now and then a startled blackbird would rise from her nest and scold the intruders, or a big leather-back would tumble off a

hummock with a noisy splash and paddle away.

The number of captured frogs had grown to thirteen now, and it was a man's task to keep the bag in hand, so many ways did it want to jump at once.

Suddenly the lamp flickered and went out, for its water chamber had become empty. It was dark—blacker than any night the boys had ever seen. What would they do? How would they get out of the big swamp? They did not dare to dip the lantern under the water, for it was blistering hot and would crack the lense. They just sat still and thought.

"I have it," said Harold, between chattering teeth. "My shoe!" In an instant it was off and full of water. The cap was removed from the water chamber. By the sickly glimmer of a lighted match the water was slowly poured from the back of the shoe into the lamp. Harold was bending over, filling the lamp, when from somewhere in the tall reeds just ahead there came a blood-curdling, half-wild laugh, and a rattling of the dry reeds.

Cooper sat suddenly upright, an oar grasped tightly in his hand, while Harold suddenly dropped lamp, shoe, and all. Vincent cried out with pain, for he had held a lighted match in each hand, and they were all but burned out. Cooper spoke in a whisper.

"Sit perfectly quiet, fellows. Do n't tip over, for we are over the quicksand beds."

Tales of tragedies in the quicksands pulsed through Bill's mind, and he became so absorbed for the moment that the bag of frogs slipped from his listless hands. There were one, two, three splashes before he came to himself again. The frogs were escaping! He rose, the boat tipped and dipped water, but Cooper, seeing the danger, quickly swung his weight to the other side. Bill caught the bag and, holding it tightly, glanced fearfully over his shoulder into the darkness.

"What was it, 'Coop?' " asked Harold, in a suppressed whisper. "It sounded like a woman."

"No, it sounded like a crazy man," replied Vincent.

"And-a it sounded like a ghost, did n't it?" suggested Bill, tremulously.

"It must be old Thomson's ghost pursuing evil spirits," added Cooper.

The boys made no reply, for they were thinking of the many stories that had come to them of the strange old hermit and his queer ways.

With very shaky fingers they finally induced the lamp to burn again, and slowly the boat worked its way out into the open water, thence to camp.

"Not a word of it to any one," warned Vincent, "for they would only laugh at us."

"They 'd never, never believe us," echoed Harold.

"And-a, Gee! but I was scared," laughed Bill. "I lost most all the frogs, too. Say, do you suppose that thing did n't like our catching them?"

When the boat touched the camp beach and the boys were safe home again, Harold stretched himself and said, "Gee, I 'd like to have seen him, though; would n't you?"

"Let's go hunt him up," suggested Cooper, but the boys begged off, saying they were too sleepy. Cooper knew only too well that they could n't be induced to sleep, but he did not urge them. They slipped quietly to their tents, while Cooper climbed the hill to the lodge with the catch of frogs, and incidentally to talk with the "chief" about the incident.

"No, it was no ghost," said the "chief," laughing. "It was a loon. I've heard them often, only earlier in the season."

"A loon!" ejaculated Cooper. "'Crazy as a loon.' I never knew what that meant before, but now I do. It was an uncanny cry. Do n't tell the kids though. Let them think it was old Hesikia's spirit. It will give them something to think about. Good-night!"

"Good-night!" said the "chief," and Cooper slipped off to his bed, laughing to himself.

CHAPTER XII

PROFESSOR GROUCH PAYS THE PENALTY

HAROLD and Vincent were awakened early the next morning by merry shouts and the ring of axes on heavy timbers. Harold was the first out of bed.

"Gee, they are working already," he cried to Vincent. "Come on. We're late."

"Working on what?" asked Vincent, drowsily.

"On the big stunt fire where they're going to burn 'Grouch.' Come on, hurry!" He slipped into his trousers, pulled on a gym jersey, stuck his head into a pan of cold water at the pump, and was off.

The camp had been astir for an hour. The fellows were busy rolling the heavy logs to the water's edge and piling them

on end about a stout hickory they had planted in the ground as a center pole.

"One, two, three—up she goes. Steady now. Here, Durbin, back this end in. Let her down—easy now. That's the ticket." So one by one the timbers were stood on end about the hickory. All the small sticks and brush that could be found were being hauled in by the smaller fellows and filled in about the base.

By breakfast the job was well along. By swimming time it was all up, well wired, oiled, and ready for the big event.

Mr. Blaine was busy most of the morning building the dummy, and by noon a real "Grouch" had been constructed. Certain portions of the gentleman's anatomy were made in secret, and there was no little speculation as to just what would happen "when the old boy got well afire."

I saw them putting in a lot of sticks of dynamite," confided "Love" to Dale and Longley.

"Those were roman candles," laughed Longley.

"How do you know?" questioned "Love."

"'Cause I saw the big box of fireworks come yesterday, and I saw the 'chief' open it this morning," replied Longley.

"Well, I saw Mr. Blaine put a lot of cannon crackers in 'Grouch's' shoes, anyway," said Vincent.

"O, those were n't cannon crackers at all," affirmed Leonard. "They were just red sox. The cook gave them to Mr. Blaine especially for the occasion."

"Well, anyway, there are a lot of big sky rockets sticking out of his coat collar, I 'll bet on that," assured Vincent.

"His head 's full of green light, too," said "Love," "'cause I found a bag down by the fire that said 'Green Light,' and I know they made his head of a big tin-can."

In the afternoon the pyramids were practiced for the last time, while in the woods adjoining the camp minstrels held a final rehearsal. Every fellow was busy.

Quite a number of visitors arrived on the evening train to stay until after July Fourth, and among them was Mr. Eldred,

who was to make the patriotic address on the morrow.

The invitation had been extended to all the neighbors, young folks, both boys and girls, to come to the big fire. After supper these began to arrive, coming in ones, twos, and threes, by boat, buggy, or afoot.

A makeshift court room had been arranged, with seats for the judge and the jurors. Professor Grouch was calmly seated on a chair, fastened to the hickory pole, high above the fire, and seemed to care very little about what was going on below him, for he looked straight ahead. His hat was cocked on one side of his head, and in his teeth he grimly held a corn-cob pipe, from the bowl of which protruded a mysterious fuse.

The guests assembled; the jurors took their seats; the judge called the court to order, and the trial began.

The counsel for the defense made a very lame plea, stating that poor Grouch had always been a grouch; a sour, crabbed man, who had never tasted real happiness in his life nor felt good-will toward any

one. He had never been known to smile or laugh. Taking it all in all, Grouch himself confessed that he had just about come to the conclusion that he really had no right to live, at least among such a crowd of live and happy boys.

The court finally charged Grouch with disturbing the peace of the camp and with the murdering of "Good Will." To these charges Grouch, through his attorney, pleaded guilty. Witnesses were then sworn in, and these to a man testified that Grouch was an unkind, unfair man, selfish in the extreme, and that his heart was anything but good. The testimony further showed that he had time after time gotten well-meaning fellows into trouble, and that he had a type of indigestion that was contagious. He was merely a public nuisance.

After all the witnesses had been on the stand, the prosecuting attorney made an eloquent speech in which he pleaded for the death of the rascal prisoner and a severe sentence for every one of his followers and accomplices, closing his appeal

to the jurors by declaring that the very future success and happiness of dear old Eberhart itself depended on the complete overthrow of this unprincipled scoundrel.

The jury were out just thirty seconds, when they returned a verdict of guilty. "Guilty of the murder of 'Good Will' in the first degree, Your Honor, and we recommend to the court that Grouch be burned at the stake this night, until he is entirely consumed, and that his spirit be sent to dwell in the swamp with that of old Thomson." The judge with marked ceremony so ordered. In a second the torches were applied to the oiled fagots, and the flames swept upward, enveloping the victim.

A long, oiled rope had been attached to the Professor and dropped into the fire. The flames quickly ran up this fuse, and in an instant Mr. Grouch was paying his last respects to his accusers. He held a red light in his right hand, his left was placed over his heart. His pipe had been filled with green light, and this he smoked

In a second the torches were applied to the oiled fagots.

vigorously. A half-dozen roman candles, concealed in his breast pocket, poured forth a shower of colored balls. Just as a great bomb exploded in his trousers' pocket, a series of sky-rockets slid out of his coat collar into the sky, to typify the releasing of his spirit. His head tipped forward, and his arms dropped listlessly at his sides just as the flames from the great pile of logs reached him. In another second he was lost from view in the clouds of smoke and flame.

There were several rousing cheers, a hearty song or two, and then the stunts began. The fire and the speeches had impressed every boy, and it was not until huge slices of water-melon made their appearance that the spirit of the trial disappeared.

Final announcements for the morrow were made, and then the crowd made for their tents amid a shower of water-melon rinds.

"Say, that was great, was n't it?" Dale said to Cooper, as they walked along the path to the tents. "I would n't have

missed it for a farm. No more grouching for mine."

"So old Grouch is gone for good," remarked "Shrimp" Warren as he slipped out of his clothes preparatory to his evening dip. "It 's a good thing, too, for he was a scalawag right, was n't he?"

"The tyrant rules no more," cried Durbin, tragically. "No more he 'll haunt our pleasant canvas homes to peeve and urge the imps of Satan on. And if he dares return, we 'll shout: 'Avaunt ye, idle, lounging villain. Why loiter ye here? for this is a happy kingdom.' "

"Where 'd you get it, Durbin?" asked Vincent, good-naturedly. "Say, by the way, Durbin, what 's the weather signs for the Fourth?"

Durbin knelt and felt of the grass at his feet.

"When the dew is on the grass,
Rain will never come to pass."

The fellows shouted their approval of the prophecy, and in less than a jiffy were in the water for their evening dip.

CHAPTER XIII

HESIKIA'S TREASURE CHEST

"ALL out to raise the new flag-pole, boys!" called the "chief," as he hastened down the long row of khaki tents early the next morning. "It 's a glorious Fourth. Let 's get the pole up before the sun gets hot."

"This is going to be some Fourth," gayly chirped Vincent as he knelt before his very disordered trunk and searched hastily through the rumpled contents for a set of clean garments.

"Let 's see," replied Harold. "First, up goes the new flag-pole, and then comes the speech—gee, I hope it 's short—and then breakfast, and then—"

"O, it won't go that fast," interrupted Cooper, who just then stuck his head in between the flaps. "Let 's make it last just as long as we can, kids. What do you say?"

Three loud booms sounded from the lodge on the hill, then there came the familiar creaking of the rusty little pulley as the big flag spread itself to the morning breeze. From the tent street came a happy chatter as the boys hurried into their clothes. Then reveille broke on the morning air. In fifteen minutes the campers had gathered on the point, and work on the hole for the flag-pole was begun. The new pole lay close by on the ground, where it had been carefully trimmed and the halyards attached the day before. By it, in a box, lay the new flag that was that morning to be raised for the first time.

"Keep your eye on the Twins," advised "Shrimp" Warren, "or they will be planting a new batch of bones in that hole for you."

"I heard that a real Indian ghost nearly scared them to death on the lake the other night," suggested Durbin. "How about it, Vincent?"

"I heard it was old Thomson's ghost," laughed Mr. Verne. "Some one told me

that Bill really saw him." But the Twins said not a word.

"And-a how did you fellows find out about it?" questioned Bill, sharply, at which they only laughed the more.

"O, we heard you talking in your sleep, said Longley. But as a matter of fact, Bill had written the details in a letter to his mother, then went off and left the letter lying on the library table.

"That ghost stuff is all rot," declared Porter. "I do n't take any stock in any of it."

The older fellows were doing most of the digging, and the size of the sandpile was increasing fast. Likewise the hole, for the sides kept caving in as they dug down until it became quite a large excavation.

Harold and Vincent had waited patiently for their turn to shovel. When it came, they jumped into the hole together and began shoveling out the soft dirt. Harold had hardly thrown out half a dozen shovelfuls when his shovel struck something hard. He raised the shovel

and drove it into the ground a second time, with the same result. It stopped, half buried in the sand.

"I 've struck something, I guess," he called out, but the fellows only laughed.

"More chicken bones, I suppose," called the "chief" from the pump, where he had gone to drink.

"O, that game of yours is old," said Durbin, disgustedly. "Get busy and get out the dirt. Let 's get that pole up, for I 'm getting hungry," and he slapped his empty stomach.

Again Harold dug his shovel into the ground as far as it would go, then began to throw the sand to one side, but there was apparently nothing to be seen.

"It 's just a rock," called "Shrimp." "Dig around it, then you can pry it out with your shovel." But Harold was on his hands and knees, digging around the supposed rock with his fingers. "It 's a great iron ring," he exclaimed, excitedly, "and it 's fast to something."

"A great iron ring?" said "Love," in-

credulously. "Let 's see." The crowd moved toward the excavation like magic, and in another second they were all peering in the hole.

"Get back!" said Cooper. "You 'll have the entire bank caved in. Here, Harold, let me see." Cooper jumped into the hole, shovel in hand. The dirt flew for a few seconds, then there was exposed a large iron ring apparently attached to something that lay out under the solid bank. Cooper braced himself and pulled, but there was not the slightest amount of give to it. He looked surprised, and the excitement grew intense, for if Cooper could n't pull it out, what in the world could it be fastened to?

"It 's an old buried live bait box probably," said the "chief." "The one we left here last season is just about covered up over there on the beach. It does n't take long in this sand."

"A bait box nothing," cried Vincent from his place in the hole. "It 's a buried treasure. It 's a chest!" And he danced

wildly in his excitement, for the sand had now caved in, exposing the black end of what appeared to be a box.

Everything imaginable was being suggested by the crowd on the bank—a sunken ship, a coffin, a big iron pot of gold, an underground cave—but this last was too extreme. All the while the digging went on in greatest haste. At length the end of a black iron box, to which the ring was attached, was completely uncovered. A group of the watchers were sent to find a heavy rope, and another group after a stout pole for use as a lever. Twice the whole was caved in and the dirt had to be shoveled out again before anything more could be accomplished, but at last Cooper was able to work the strange box loose from its age-old resting place, but was unable to lift it out to the bank. Many willing hands were stretched down into the hole to lend aid, and the treasure box was dragged out.

It had been set just above the present water-line of the lake, but from its rusty appearance, it had beyond a doubt been at

one time below the water level. The ring was missing from the socket on the other end, and the stout lever that was meant to open and close its safe-like door was rusted so badly that it could not be moved. There was a keyhole just to one side of this bar, but it too had long since sifted full of rust and sand. Anyway, where was the key? What was this box? What strange story of the long-forgotten past was this that was in these few moments brought to light so unexpectedly? That was the question. What was the answer?

Never before had so large a crowd of boys occupied so small a space, namely: the space immediately surrounding the momentous find. Questions poured in like rain. A hundred vivid imaginations were busy in an instant, building strange tales from the few facts already at hand. In a flash a hundred likelihoods were put into words. All the mysterious buried treasure stories of all time seemed to rise together to offer their help and suggestions for the solution.

"Three dead men on a dead man's chest,

yo-ho, and a bottle of rum!" shouted Durbin; but it is doubtful if the others even heard him, for the mysterious box was being cautiously turned over and over and surveyed from every angle. How to get into it—that was the next question. Time had worked cruelly with the old chest. Rust had checked and eaten and weakened it, yet the strong steel plates were still amply able to hold their secret from curious eyes.

"An ax and a chisel!" shouted Cooper. Harold was off toward the lodge in a flash, to secure the desired articles.

"And a file and a hacksaw," he shouted after the retreating figure, which was nearly to the top of the hill.

"O, Bill, if we just had that ghost of yours here now, I bet he could help us out," confided "Love" with his little giggle. But Bill was not thinking of ghosts just then; for was not here before his very eyes a really, truly, buried treasure? Perhaps it had belonged to Captain Kidd himself, for all Bill knew, and inside—he dared not think, at least out loud. Al-

ready he was turning over in his mind the things he would have to write home about the wonderful discovery.

All eyes were turned impatiently toward Harold, for he was coming, loaded down with tools, and no one thinking to go and help him, while each second of suspense seemed like an hour.

"Hey, there, boy; get a hustle on you!" shouted Stellner, who was very impatient at the short delay. "We want to see what 's inside, you rube."

"If it 's gold, who gets it?" questioned Vincent, thereby giving away the trend of his thoughts.

"We bought it with the land, I suppose," answered the "chief," shortly, a puzzled look on his face.

"Now we can have a motor boat and all the other things we want, can't we?" exclaimed "Shrimp," who already held the precious contents in his clenched hands, in his mind.

The bottom of the chest was finally chosen as the weakest part, as it was only riveted to the rim, while the sides were

set into a strong framework. Accordingly the box was turned face downward on the sand, and a few of Cooper's telling blows with the heavy ax loosened the ancient rivets, and the bottom gave way. The crowd of eager boys pressed forward to get the first glimpse of what was inside.

"I see bags!" shouted Harold, who was on his knees as close as he could possibly get to the chest. "O! It 's full of gold and money!" He fairly stuck his head into the old chest, only to jerk it back again as quickly, for a strange, foul odor was issuing from the chest and filling all the air with its musty, sour smell, as of old, wet papers rotting in a damp, dark cellar.

At last the bottom was carefully removed and the contents disclosed, followed by a chorus of exclamations, for there before them were three rotten cloth bags, each bulging with its precious contents.

"And guns!" shouted "Love."

"And daggers and hair and books!" shouted "Shrimp." "Is the hair a scalp?" And he reached forward and picked it up gingerly, holding it at arm's length before the astonished campers, while the hair unwrapped itself in the warm, dry air with slow, snakelike movements.

Two hundred hands were eagerly extended to receive a sample of the treasure. A hundred excited faces watched every move the "chief" made as he turned the contents over and set some of it aside to see what lay deeper in the shadows. After a hurried conference among the leaders it was decided to remove the treasure, chest and all, to the lodge, where everything could be spread out on tables, for the books and papers—and there was a goodly packet of the latter—were wet, rotten, and discolored. The secret of the chest was, no doubt, there; so they must be handled carefully, every one of them, until the truth was known.

"Give me something to carry," begged "Specks."

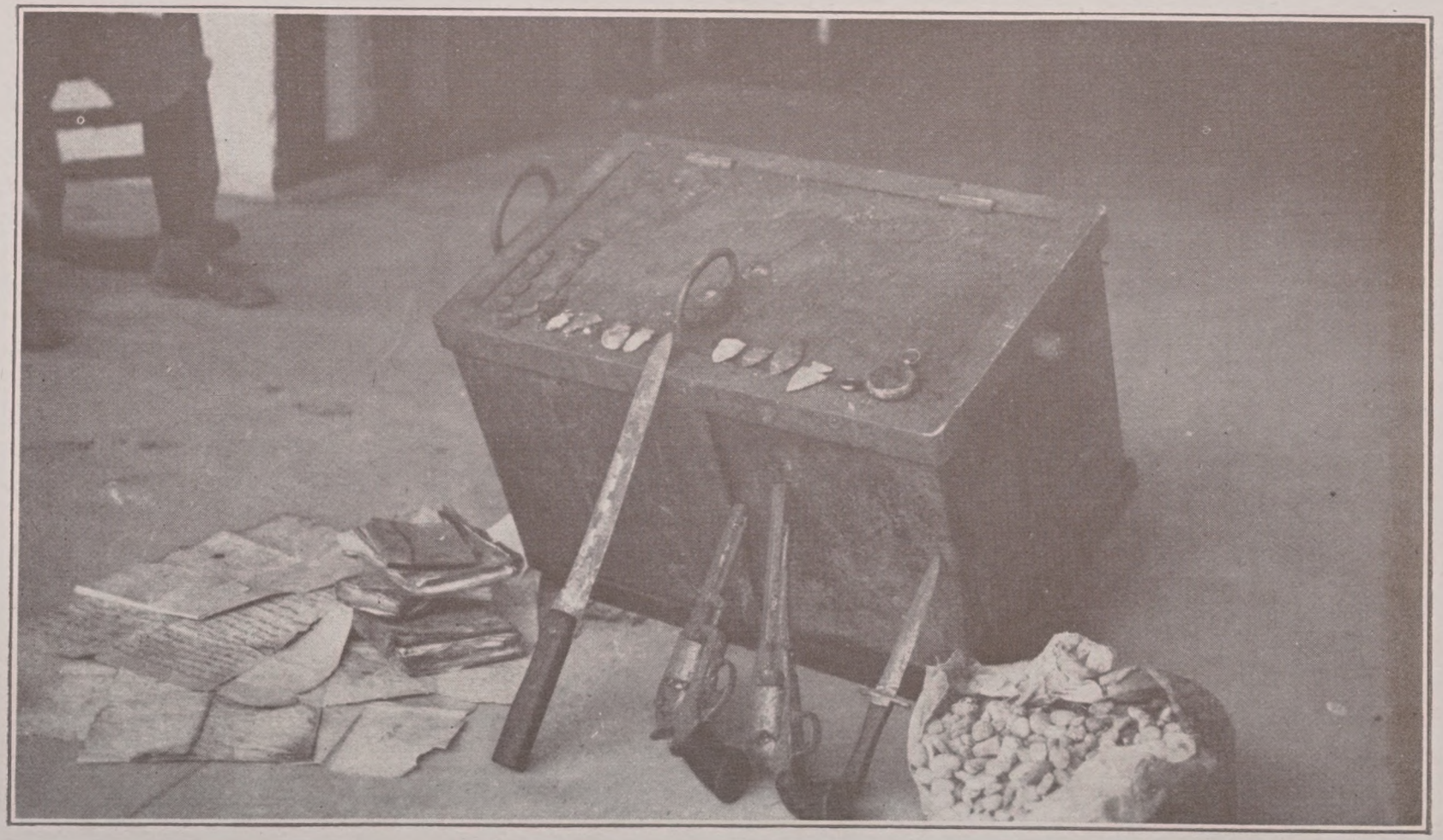
"And me," cried Johnnie.

"And me," "And me," came in a chorus from every boy.

Twice, three times the chef hammered the breakfast bell, but it was unheard or, if heard, unheeded. What was a mere breakfast as compared to a buried treasure!

Carefully the "chief" took hold of the largest bag to lift it from the chest. As he did so, the bottom gave way, scattering the contents in the chest. Silence followed, for what they saw was such a surprise that no one could speak. The "chief" stood as if paralyzed, holding the empty remnant of the bag, for where they expected to see shining coins of gold and silver, there were only hundreds upon hundreds of small, clean pebbles.

"Hesikia Thomson," breathed some one, and the words were repeated by others of the group. Disappointment shone on many a face for a moment. Then, as the meaning of those words became clear to them, their faces brightened with a new and greater interest.



"The treasure chest of Hesikia Thomson, the crazy hermit," repeated the "Chief."

"The treasure chest of Hesikia Thomson, the crazy hermit," slowly repeated the "chief." "He thought these stones would turn to gold. Poor, deluded mortal!"

"Poor fool!" said Durbin. "And yet we thought they were gold ourselves. 'What fools these mortals be!'" and everybody laughed. The tension of the excitement was broken.

A line was quickly formed, and to each boy was given some one thing to carry to the lodge. To one boy it was a handful of the white pebbles. To another it was a gun of ancient cap-and-ball design, its one time gleaming barrel pitted with the age-old rust; and to another its mate, that also had suffered much from its long, damp rest, its trigger fast, its hammer rusted red. Then came an evil-looking sheath-knife, the brass mountings on its handle green with age, the once keen blade darkened with ancient bloody stains. There was a watch of by-gone pattern, the name that had been engraved upon its silver case still showing plainly on the back.

Then came a dozen coins of small denominations, bearing the United States stamp and dates that showed them all to be of ripe old age.

"Give me the arrow-heads," cried Vincent, who had been waiting for a choice bit of the treasure to carry up the hill. Another boy received a tiny bag of gold ore, and another a heavy wedding ring, the true story of which would probably never be known. Then came an ancient leather powder horn, the leather hard, the copper rivets green.

So the line filed by, each one receiving a share of the strange contents. The packet of wet and musty papers the "chief" kept in his own possession. Last in the procession came Cooper and Mr. Blaine, bringing the heavy box itself, in which the mysteries had been buried.

The flag-pole was forgotten, the speech was forgotten, even breakfast held no attraction. And when the treasures reached the lodge each fellow wanted to finger every article and form his own conclusions.

The "chief" took the packet of papers into the office and spread them out to dry, scanning each one carefully for any signs of information. There were old deeds more than one hundred years old. One particularly yellow slip, that was nearly past reading, was dated 1739, and was an ancient deed to land in His Majesty's Colony of Connecticut. Another was dated 1795, and showed the change from English money to United States money.

"For and in consideration of the sum of four hundred dollars lawful money of the State of Connecticut," it read. There were several others, all deeds to land somewhere in New England. Then came a will, a carefully wrapped packet of ancient checks, and some letters that were too far gone to be read.

Next came a packet larger than the rest, which proved upon careful examination to be written on vellum instead of paper, and were in better condition than any of the others. When they were opened and spread out, what was the surprise to find two sketches of Corey Lake itself, accu-

rate in every detail except proportion. The first very clearly indicated the position of the box that had just been found. At the same time there were two other marks exactly similar. One was located on the extreme end of Bass Point, the other on the island.

When this fact became known to the boys, wild excitement reigned, and every camper wanted to organize a party at once to search for the other chests; but they were persuaded to wait, for there were many other things of great interest to be talked over if they but waited.

The first map had a very peculiar cipher in the upper right-hand corner, but no one was able to even suggest its meaning. There were also a series of dotted lines running across the water, and at a point that seemed to be about the center of the lake, there was a large black cross. In the lower right-hand corner were these words:

"Cedar chest with body. Key in Lonesome Oak."

The mystery deepened. "Cedar chest

with body. Key in Lonesome Oak." What body? Where was the "Lonesome Oak?" Did the dark cross represent the resting place of a human body? What great secret was this that had come to light in so strange a manner—come to light from the depths of a once vast wilderness? Perhaps a hundred years had rolled away, a nation had been built, a continent civilized, since this odd secret chamber had been buried, only to be dug up again and pried into by human hands a century later.

The second map seemed to be merely an enlargement of that part of the first which showed the location of the three treasure chests. In the upper left of this was a second strange, unreadable message in cipher. In the right-hand corner were the words in bold letters, "God Rules," and in the lower corner the simple direction, "Large oak. 4th m. from S. S. 14 ft. S. C. P." What could it all mean? Who could read the cipher, and what secret did it hold?

The third seemed to be a letter, evi-

dently the last written of the old hermit, and plainly showed his mental condition at that time.

The boys were at last induced to line up for breakfast, and as the chef rewarmed the food this letter was read aloud:

> "To Those Concerned:—This chest is the property of Hesikia Thomson, formerly of New England, later of the Michigan wilderness. A spiritualist of God believing, and my spirit will still roam over these lakes in the full moon seasons, guarding all my valuable, deposited possessions, for they are many and varied. God gave me many wonderful secrets, but because of the great sin, he took them all away but one, the least of them, the turning of sable stones into gold. I have buried this secret by the body of old Duckwing in the big swamp. God rest my soul. God has filled the earth with gold. Devils do not believe it, but has He not promised, 'seek and find?' The blue heron is wise and

the night owl, but man is an ass, for he walketh not in the ways of the Most High.

"My father's spirit, rest his soul, taught me when the warm breeze of full moon came, that sable stones were gold by faith. The Mighty One granted a prophet as a reward for serving his mother's spirit and keeping it from the fiery devils. I bequeath my secret to you with all of the possession of the spirit family. They make you rich, for my spirit ever guards he who is the owner. You are a talisman. I guard this chest always, and those others also. The Island is doomed forever, it is the abiding place of the seven devils! Beware! Fish die, birds drop as they pass, and man disappears in its cavernous depths. The arrow-heads are the peace tokens of the Running Water, but the gold came from those depths of the cave. The luck stone saved her from the evil one. The knife, the one that drank his life's

blood, is cursed for ever. The books were her possessions from the older days before the great shadow fell; the man may claim his papers, Duckwing knows how I came by them. He died for lack of faith. The guns were his, they were found upon his body. He had obtained the ring, but the spirits found him. The gold pebbles were my own products of my genius. Place them in the spring at midnight, as the blue heron passes the swamp, —all believing, nothing doubting, I will aid you. The spirit bid me hasten. I must be gone. Farewell."

Great was the discussion as to the true meaning of such sentences as: "God gave me many wonderful secrets, but because of the great sin He took them all away but one;" "The arrow-heads are the peace offering of Running Water;" "The knife, the one that drank his life's blood, is cursed forever;" "The books were her possessions from the old days before the great shadow fell;" "The man may claim his pa-

pers, Duckwing knows how came I by them;" "The guns were his, they were found on his body;" "He had obtained the ring, but the spirit bound him;" "I have buried this secret by the body of old Duckwing in the big swamp."

It was past ten o'clock when breakfast was over and the dishes cleared away. Of course the ball game was not played as had been planned, but because it was July Fourth and the Nation's birthday, the still excited campers were called together to finish the half completed task of raising the flag-pole and flying the new flag.

"The pole will serve a double purpose now," said the "chief." "For it will not only fly our new flag, but will forever mark the spot where Hesikia consigned his secrets to the earth."

The pole was soon planted and the banner flung to the breeze amid hearty cheers. Then came the flag salute by as enthusiastic a crowd of young Americans as were ever banded together. Then the party found places beneath the shadows of the remaining fringe of the wonderful wood-

land that had once been Hesikia's abiding place, and there listened attentively to the splendid address by Mr. Eldred.

"Fellow Campers:—We have just set free to the breeze the grandest banner that flies this day upon the earth.*

"The story is told, and I suppose it is true, of General Washington discussing with his lieutenants the design and colors of a National emblem. They were seated at a table, and as they talked a sunbeam stole through the window, fell upon a glass in front of them, and there on the white tablecloth before the whole company shone the beautiful red, white, and blue of our National flag. And I know that to-day, as the light shines through our hearts, it is refracted into the same patriotic colors.

"This is our Nation's birthday, and it is fitting that we should stop for a little while and reflect upon how much our country means to us, and upon how much we may mean to our country. You have all read the fine story of Philip Nolan, the 'Man Without a Country.' You will remember that in his youth, as a young soldier, he

* NOTE.—Address given at Camp Eberhart, July 4, 1912, by Mr. S. B. Pettingill.

joined with Aaron Burr in an act of treason against the United States. When he was brought to trial he declared with an oath that he hoped that he would never hear the name of the United States again. In accordance with his wish, the court decreed that he should be taken on board ship to cruise around as long as he should live, but never to see his native land, nor hear her name again. And then we know how the long years passed until finally Philip Nolan went down to his grave in the sea broken-hearted because he had no fatherland. But we have a country and a country's flag. It is not the flag of a single State. It does not represent a single section; it is not the cross of St. George nor the banner of St. Andrew; it is not the emblem of any individual nor the personal standard of any king. It is the flag of a country: there is a State for every star and a star for every State. The Stars and Stripes stand for America. Kings and countries both have individualities; they both have adherents and defenders. But the one is mortal, while the other is immortal. And so it is that almost a century and a half after it was first flung to the breeze, our flag still waves as the emblem of a living, breathing country. It is to-

day the oldest flag, save that of Holland, now flown by a civilized nation.

"Sometimes I wonder why we do not love our banner more. Why is it, I wonder, that we so often sit with covered heads when the flag is raised or the 'Star Spangled Banner' is played? Why should we be outdone by the gallant Southerners, who go wild every time they hear the strains of 'Dixie?' Why need we wait until we are in foreign lands before the sight of the flag shall thrill us? Let us, my young friends, not be afraid to be Americans. Let us not always wait for the spur of martial music before we do the brave and manly thing.

"We look back upon the patriot soldiers of the Revolution, and their every act and deed seems invested with a halo and a charm. We long to march away with them to the stirring strains of fife and drum, and do great things for God and country. But to-day, though you do not hear the throbbing drums, there is a Call to Arms. 'Right forever on the scaffold; wrong forever on the throne.' This very day the armies of the future are being mustered in. This day you may enlist in some great cause. From the kindled altar of to-day Patriotism may snatch an ember

and touch some boyish lips with the old deathless fire. And in the service of our country in the ranks of every-day life there is a need for courage as high and loyal as ever hero had.

"It is easy to get men to do their duty with the bullet box, but it is hard to get men to do their duty—the thing they ought to do—with the ballot box. Men will always take their stand for the flag on the field, but how hard to get them to take the stand in the courthouse and swear that evil is afoot and that certain men should be sent to jail. There are always volunteers to march away in the 'pomp and circumstance of war' and sound the tocsin of alarm from every church tower when a foreign foe lands upon our shores, but when the hidden foe of graft and corruption and bribery is eating the heart out of great cities, we are as dumb dogs that dare not bark when the wolf climbs into the fold. It is always easy to find men who are glad to do great things for their country, if only they can be done in the 'high Roman fashion,' but it is hard to find men who will serve their country by paying their just taxes and insisting that when they are paid, they shall be well and truly spent. O, if ever we needed our

Paul Reveres and Nathan Hales, we need them now. We need men in the council chambers of our cities who will sign their names to a public measure as boldly as John Hancock signed the Declaration. We need soldiers of the common good in legislative halls who will cry as passionately as John Adams, 'Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote.' We need men of the spirit of Abraham Lincoln when he first saw slaves sold upon the block. 'If ever I get a chance,' he said, 'I shall strike this accursed thing hard.' We need men, young men, in school and college, in Y. M. C. A.'s and in every rank of life who will always remember that 'plain living and high thinking' is the first duty of citizenship.

"Down in the museum of the Y. M. C. A. at South Bend you have all seen that tree trunk taken from the field of Chickamauga. The other day I counted in that gnarled and war-torn wood thirteen pieces of grape and shrapnel and cannister. And I thought of the brave men who faced that fire of death as though it were nothing but a summer's breeze—all for country, nothing for themselves. I thought of father, son, and aged sire on the slopes of

Bunker Hill with their old flint-lock muskets facing the best troops of Europe—all for country, nothing for themselves. I thought of the Continental soldiers at Valley Forge, sitting around their winter camp fires, starving, freezing, dying, just to make the Declaration good. I thought of Washington kneeling in prayer because he knew that 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it'—all for country, nothing for themselves. And I can't help feeling that the Declaration still needs its defenders, democracy still needs her soldiers. 'All men are created equal.' Sometimes we hear sneers at that, but we know that the Anglo-Saxon race will never strike out a single word from that great Declaration. Sometimes we hear men sneer at the failures of popular government. But we know that democracy, with all its follies and failures, stands for all that has been achieved thus far in the world-long struggle for liberty under law. Democracy will not fail. Government of the people will not perish from the earth. Do you know what Fisher Ames said about democracy—Fisher Ames, one of the great orators of the Revolution—in contrasting democracy with monarchy? This is what he said: 'A monarchy is like

a man-of-war, beautiful in motion, irresistible when under way, but a single hidden rock sends her to the bottom; while democracy is like a raft, always in trouble, your feet always wet, but nothing can sink her.'

"This is the All Souls' Day of America. To-day democracy is making up her jewels. To-day young hearts are being fired with the tales of devotion and self-sacrifice. To-day strong men are being spurred on to heroism in the service of their city, State, or Nation. And we know that, however great the evils of our time, our country will live on if we will always remember, each year, this day to keep it holy."

As he finished and sat down, there was hearty applause; then the boys rose, and with spirits moved and enthusiasm thoroughly awakened they sang "America" with a merry ring.

The news of the discovery at the camp spread through the countryside like wildfire, and by dinner time farmers were coming from every direction to see the chest of Hesikia and to add their bit of

hearsay to the rapidly growing volume of information concerning the strange old man.

Every spare moment for the rest of the day was filled with speculating and secret planning for the recovering of the other treasures, for it was commonly believed that the real treasure was concealed in the other chests.

Large numbers of visitors came to witness the water sports in the afternoon, and to see the grand display of fireworks in the evening, but running through and above everything else was the intense interest in the secrets of Hesikia Thomson. Every bit of information that any one secured was passed from mouth to mouth until it became current news. A thousand plausible stories of just how it all happened and its real meaning were discussed and compared until at last, when the visitors had gone, taps had sounded, and every boy was in his bed, his only thought was, "How long would it be until the morrow?" Every boy in camp talked himself to sleep that night, then dreamed fanciful dreams

of buried fortunes and mysterious secrets written in unsolvable ciphers.

"And-a, gee, 'Coop,' I 'll bet the ghost is mad to-night," said Bill. "I 'm glad I 'm not hunting frogs, are n't you?" But Cooper did n't answer, for he was already dreaming marvelous dreams of things that could n't be, of chests, and ghosts, and mysteries.

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH SOME THINGS ARE EXPLAINED

"MORNIN', sonny! Is this that there Camp Hardforever I ben hearin' so much 'bout here lately?" The speaker was a very old man who had just driven into the camp property, and was addressing the first boy he chanced to meet.

"Camp what?" questioned Vincent, an amused smile playing on his face. Then, without giving the old man a chance to reply, he continued, "You mean Camp Eberhart, do n't you?"

"Yep, yep, Camp Everhard, that 's it. The place where ye jest lately dug up ole Thomson's vallbles."

"Yes, sir, this is the place," answered Vincent in a friendly way. "Would you like to see the things that were in the chest?"

The old man with some difficulty climbed out of his buggy and calmly surveyed the camp grounds, the lodge, and the beautiful lake. His eye finally rested on the row of big green rocking chairs on the broad veranda of the lodge. Turning, he hobbled to the nearest one and sat down.

"Wal, sir, things sure does change; they sure does change. It 's ben a mighty lot o' years sence I ben on to this here land, an' it sure has changed.

"I live over north o' here 'bout ten mile er so, lived there all my life, an' sence this blue blazin' rheumatics hes got inter my jints I ain't ben around much."

He leaned back comfortably in the big chair, and after a long and careful search through his pockets, drew out an old corncob pipe and a plug of tobacco. Then suddenly, as if aware that he had made a mistake, he slipped it quickly into his pocket again, and, looking up at Vincent a little sheepishly, said:

"Pardon, sonny, ye don't allow no smokin' here, do ye?"

Vincent assured the old man that he was welcome to smoke if he wished, and with a smile of pleasure he again brought forth the old pipe, filled and lighted it. He sat silently smoking for some seconds, then Vincent, who was a little abashed at the old man's silence, spoke up.

"Did you say you would like to see the things that were in the chest?" he inquired, by way of encouragement.

"Yes, yes, sonny," said the old man, slightly startled, for he had evidently been dreaming.

"Yep, I would, if it ain't no trouble," he continued, between puffs. "Yes, sir, I 'd like ter. It is so different, this here land. Oncet it wus covered with the grandest timber ye ever see in yer life. Great oaks an' whitewoods, an' hickory. Why, when I wus a young feller, my father an' me come inter these here woods to cut a set o' barn timbers, an' they 're standin' over on my place yet. In them days there wa'n't ary a clearin' around these lakes, jest timber clean to the water's edge, an' Indians an' game o' every kind. I 've seen

them woods over yonder so full o' wild pigeons in the evenin' thet ye could go in an' kill 'em with a club. Oncet I shot the biggest buck thet 's ever ben seen in this here country, down yonder on thet point. It wus early evenin'. I 'd come to fish, an' the old buck come down t' drink, an' I shot him frum my dugout. I 've killed wild ducks an' geese by the hundred frum them cat-tails off that long sandbar. But, sonny, them days is gone, an' now we 're civilized." He laughed a dry, cackling little laugh, like autumn leaves blowing through the frosty forest.

Several of the boys had come on to the scene by this time, and realizing that a story was in progress, quietly edged in to where they could sit down and listen.

"I camped all the year round them days, boys, an' I did n't hev no tent ner city boats like as ye 've got neither. Dad an' me made our own boat out o' a great whitewood, burned it out with hot rocks evenin's after the work wus done. They wus jest a small clearin' on this here farm then, an' when Dad did n't need me fer a

few days I 'd come over an' work fer this ole feller Thomson. He wus a queer ole—"

"Did you work for Hesikia?" asked half a dozen eager boys in one breath.

"Did you actually know old Thomson?" asked Vincent a second time, just to be sure he had heard aright.

"I certainly did know him, sonny, an' worked fer him, too," said the old man. "He owes me fer three days o' grubbin' stumps yet, the ole rascal.

"I seen some time afore his wife left him thet he wus actin' queer like, an' sometimes he never come home fer days, an' when he did come he 'd work day an' night t' make up fer lost time. Seemed like he believed an evil spirit wus after him, er somethin'.

"The last spring afore he went clean plumb crazy, I recollect the corn wus up about a foot an' doin' fine. I wus a-helpin' him cultivate it. Wal, sir, I went home fer a couple o' days, an' when I come back to work I seen every last stalk o' that there corn pulled up an' a-layin' in the field. I

asked the ole feller 'bout it, an' he ups an' says the spirits told him t' do it, 'cause they had learned him how t' turn stones inter gold, an' he would n't need t' work no more. Then he fetched me t' the house an' told me a great rigamarole about blue herons, an' swamps,' an' moonlight, an' sech blatherin', an' ended up by givin' me a handful o' stones as my pay, an' tellin' me t' jest do with 'em as he said an' I 'd hev gold."

"Why, that 's just what he says about the stuff out of the chest," interrupted Harold.

"He did, eh?"

"Yes. Do n't you want to see the things?" urged Harold, rising to lead the way.

The old man got upon his shaky legs and hobbled into the office, where the contents of the chest was spread out so that it could be seen without being handled.

The old man surveyed the things before him for an instant, and the friendly smile slipped from his face. He stood speechless for several seconds, his face blank.

Then he began to mutter strange, incoherent sentences, saying over and over again, as he handled each article, "Wal, by gol! Wal, by gol!" At last he turned to the boys, a fierce, cold glint in his eyes.

"So ole Dad wus right, after all, after all." The boys were puzzled.

"Well, what do—"

Vincent held up his finger, motioning the boy who had started to speak to be quiet.

The old man took firm hold of the wicked-looking sheath-knife and raised it aloft, seeming to live over again some incident of the long ago.

The boys were talking in undertones among themselves now, but the old man did not seem to hear them. He was dreaming. After a moment he turned and with half-closed eyes addressed the group of boys before him.

"They wus not a man in the Secret Service o' the early days, boys, but would o' gone many a weary mile t' find that there knife. That knife wus the property o' that famous Pottawatomie chieftain,

Sau-au-quett, an' is the knife he wus murdered with at Coldwater in 1839. The gossip o' the time had it that Thomson had hired the deed done, an' that Duckwing wus the offender. Yonder is the very pair o' pistols that Sau-au-quett allus wore, an' that wus supposed to o' ben in his belt at the time o' his murder. They wus never seen agin by any one until now. Then Duckwing disappeared suddent from these here parts, but it was allus thought thet he wus put t' death by the same Indian thet had killed his wife here on the shores o' this lake several years before.

"My father uster often nod his head knowin'ly an' say thet ole Thomson knowed more 'bout the killin' o' Duckwing than we calculated, but we uster jest laf at 'im. Wus they any papers er letters in the chest 'long with these here things?"

"Yes, sir," replied Harold, "but the 'chief' has them locked up; I 'll go and find him."

A few moments later he returned with the "chief," and the papers were spread out for the old man's inspection. He be-

came very much excited as he looked over the maps and the ciphers.

"Mighty funny," he was saying. "Oncet when I wus yet a little tad I found a big strip o' birchbark in the grass on the island, an' on it wus jest sech writin' as this here. I took it home t' father, an' o' winter evenin's we uster set an' figger at it, but we wus never able to complete it. But I recollect seein' lots o' them figgers.

"I recollect after Thomson was found froze to death in the woods they wus some talk 'bout his hevin' buried a treasure, but folks wus mostly o' the opinion thet it wus on the island in a cave somewhere, an' thet it wus mostly merchandise thet he hed got by tradin' whisky t' the Indians after the big treaty payment; but nothin' wus ever found. Though I hev heard said thet them goods wus all found in a cave on the island by a band o' Indians and wus all took away. When Thomson found it wus gone, he thought the evil spirits had took it, an' wus afraid t' go near the island, claimin' it wus cursed forever.

"Father told me oncet how he shot

frum the island inter a big flock o' ducks thet wus passin' overhead, and killed seven. Hesikia seen 'em fall, but did n't hear no shot, an' after thet he declared thet birds dropped dead as they passed thet bit o' land."

The "chief" handed him the faded yellow sheet bearing the strange letter from Hesikia's pen. The old man read very slowly, for his eyes were dim, and every sentence wus a subject for a story.

"Yep, the ole chest wus hisn all right, boys. I 've seen it stand behind the ole cabin door, but no one knowed what become of it after his death." There was a silence as he read on.

"Ha! ha! So his spirit still roams, does it? Wal, they 's them as thinks so.

"One time father's bull, an' he wus a mean ole boy, got loose in the night an' wandered over t' a neighbor's barnyard. It jest happened thet they hed ben gettin' in their winter's wood, an' hed it piled up in two long piles, with jest room enough ter walk between. Wal, the farmer hed went t' the city, an' somehow Dad's ole

bull got in between them two piles o' cordwood, an' they had been stacked purty high. When the bull got t' scratchin' hisself on the pile, it falls on to him frum both sides. In jest 'bout a minute he wus snowed in with cordwood an' let go some o' the awfullest bellowin' thet wus ever heard in this here section. The hired hand an' the farmer's wife rushed out ter see what wus happenin', an' found their woodpile heavin' up an' down, an' the most awful bellowin' comin' from the inside somewheres. The ole lady wus awful superstitious, an' she said she knowed it wus Hesikia's ghost. After a spell the bull worked hisself free and come home. Yep, they is them as says his spirit is still roamin', but thet 's where it started."

"But we did hear his ghost, honest, one night before we dug up the chest," confided Harold, which was the signal for all the other fellows to laugh. Harold became very indignant, but protested that it was the truth.

"Well, then what could it have been, if it was n't Hesikia's spirit?" he asked of

the old man. But he had gone on with his reading, and the question was never answered.

The smile again faded from his kindly old face as he read aloud:

" 'But because of the great sin he took them all away from me but one, the least of them.' Thet great sin must hev somethin' t' do with ole Duckwing. I wonder if he did—" But he never finished the thought, at least aloud.

"Ole Runnin' Water wus the medicine man o' the Nottawas," he continued. "An' most likely some time Thomson scared him with the spirit talk. Ole Runnin' Water must o' brought him his twelve best arrer-points as a gift fer which Hesikia wus ter keep off the evil spirits frum the Indian an' his family. I 've heard my father tell o' how many valuable beaver skins the ole hermit got frum the Indians in jest thet way.

" 'The luck stone saved her from the evil one—' His wife, I calculate, 'cause she always wore a little white stone on a

cord about her neck. Some priest hed give it to her as an omen o' good luck.

" 'The knife that drank his life's blood is cursed forever.' Wal! wal!

" 'The man may claim his papers, Duckwing knows how came I by them.' " He pondered the meaning of these words for some seconds, then rising from his chair, he exclaimed:

"My dad wus right, all right, 'bout ole Sau-au-quett's murder."

Again he handled carefully the old guns, the knives, and the powder horn, and after a prodigious yawn he lighted his pipe and passed out on to the porch.

"Do you suppose it 's worth our while digging for the other chests?" eagerly questioned Vincent.

"Wall, sonny, I 'll tell ye," said the old man, "they ain't no use whatever in diggin' too deep inter a man's past. Ye allus finds things that disappints ye. If the ole feller 's got any more chests, ye better leave 'em in the ground, 'cause the ole feller probably done the best he knowed how,

an' foolish people's notions has made a lot out o' nothin'. These here Indians most allus deserved all they got, even if they wus mistreated sometimes.

"Do n't never any o' ye boys bury no secrets, never, 'cause sure as shootin' some feller 'll come erlong in a hundred years an' dig 'em all up, an' you 'll be sorry, 'cause they 'll all be misunderstood by some wise fellers, sure. I must be a-goin' now."

So saying, the old man hobbled to his buggy and painfully got into it. After thanking the boys for showing him round, and inviting them to come and see him, he drove away.

Vincent watched him drive slowly down the hill and out of the gate, then turning to his companions, he said:

"Come on, you kids, let 's go and help some of those new fellows pass off their points for their Honor System. Everybody helped us when we came, and it 's not long now till we 'll have to be piking for home."

"Gee, I hate to think of it, do n't you?"

"You fellows must have been a fishing."

said Dale. "This old camp will be awfully quiet without you fellows."

"O, well, we 'll come again next year," replied Vincent, "and there will be plenty new to keep us busy."

Just then Cooper and "Deak" came slowly up the hill with a great string of fresh-caught fish between them.

"Gee, whilikins!" cried "Love." "You fellows must have been a-fishing."

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